



The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Dept. Annual for 1979.

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FOREWORD

By the time this edition is published the black majority rule Government will be in power. Hopefully the war will be diminishing and nations such as America and Britain will have come to their senses or be in the process of so doing. Perhaps the country can once again look to their traditional friendship with some trust.

While the above are indefinite and uncertain prognostications, I am sure of two important factors which are firstly, that chieftainship is indestructible and is wholly necessary and secondly, that an administration which understands the Rhodesian black man is indispensable. Let me expand a little. Chieftainship with its structure, its spiritual authority, and its grass roots understanding, has been the main tool in the hands of the administrator ever since formal modern government administration came to this country. It is important not only to government, but to the black people themselves, who are all tribesmen to some degree. Similarly the administration of black Rhodesians within or without their tribal areas in the new multiracial atmosphere will continue to demand men of experience and understanding of their customs and beliefs. The Tribal Trust Lands have suffered in every direction from the war and their rapid recovery and speedy widespread development will be primary tasks of the new Government.

The development plan has been made, and depends for its execution on the injection of fairly massive doses of capital. However, as it must, the plan concerns itself with major development projects, and the mundane day to day recovery and maintenance of the wide range of minor infrastructure which is so essential to tribal life will once again, as it should, be left to the District Commissioner and his staff at "grass roots" level. Furthermore a new and equally important task, which flows from the grand plan of development, must be undertaken and that is the education and persuasion of the tribesmen into accepting and participating in the new development projects. This will give life and endurance to these projects and prevent the growth of the huge expensive "white elephants" which have been notable features in the countries which lie north of our border.

A sound administration which knows the people and which in turn is known by them and chieftainships which have been restored to health and strengthened, are vital elements in any government's plan. These vital elements also require the emphatic understanding of all ministries of the service who will be working with them at all levels and of the new politicians in power.

May I wish my successor, all officers and employees in every department and branch of the ministry, and also NADA itself, success and achievement in the future.

Salisbury, 17th April, 1979.

A. D. B. YARDLEY

Notes on Contributors

Professor G. L. Chavunduka has a B.A. degree in sociology and economics from the University of California. In Britain he gained a M.A. economics degree from the University of Manchester and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in medical sociology from the University of London.

He is a Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Rhodesia. He is also a member of the university Senate.

P. R. Hurlston came to Northern Rhodesia in 1953 to join the PWD. He joined the Department of Research and Specialist services as a technical assistant in 1965 at the Rhodes Inyanga Experimental Station, transferred to the Department of African Education joining the staff of the first F2 school in 1967, and later spent five years as an instructor at Mlezu Rural Technical Institute and since 1976 has been YFC Officer for Midlands Province.

E. \.V. Krog was educated at Christ's Hospital (Bluecoat School) and came to Rhodesia in 1938 on a BSA Company appointment. Joined Native Affairs Department in 1939 and Rhodesia Forces in 1940. Served with Rhodesian AntiTank Battery in East Africa and Middle East campaigns. Post war, went farming, then was in printing and publishing for some years. Appointed to the Rhodesia Literature Bureau in 1959 and has directed its operations since 1962. Recipient, on behalf of the Literature Bureau, of the 1974 Book Centre of Rhodesia Literary Award for being the organisation considered to have contributed the most towards literature in Rhodesia during the year. Contributes widely to journals and magazines on subjects of African literature and mountaineering.

F. W. J. McCosh, after retiring from the Ministry of Education in 1967, obtained PhD (London) in the History and Philosophy of Science. For the past three years was an Honorary Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education, University of Rhodesia, where his research field was African traditional science. He now lives at Westerham, Kent.

Charles Shand, at the time of writing was a DO in the Mudsi District and has worked for a year with the Mkota people. He has since resigned.

R. J. Theisen at the time of writing was a research officer for the Ministry in sociocultural subjects. He worked in Matabeleland North and South and in Mashonaland. He is now in South Africa.

The Social Organization of the Mashona

Part III

by C. J. K. Latham

The Svikiro

Within the tribe, as has been described in previous pages, there are various spirits or shades of the departed. These are called mudzimu (plural midzimu) and mhondoro. The svikiro is the spirit medium or gobetween of the shades with the living members of the lineage groups. It becomes obvious then, that each lineage within a tribe, each segment, has its own spiritmedium to represent its own particular shades. The svikiro usually represents the sikarudzi, or founder of the lineage. The tribal mhondoro or senior mudzimu is usually the spirit of the tribal founding ancestor musikavanhu or sikarudzi (the "creator of men" or "creator of the tribe").

People become spirit mediums by a process of selection and training. It seems from research that very often the svikiro of an area is an outsider in the initial instance, who has received his training as a svikiro in another district or province. This may be done by becoming attached to a medium as an acolyte (nechombo), where one acquires the skills and arts, and historical knowledge which is so imperative in this occupation.

Anyone may become a svikiro, male or female, and there is no restriction as to age or other qualifications. However, those people most likely to become mediums are those who are most affected by spiritual phenomena and who are by nature sensitive and highly strung; epileptics are often found amongst the ranks of the spirit mediums.

An Introduction to the Functions of the Svikiro

In the last chapter the selection of chiefs and tribal authorities was investigated in some detail and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the svikiro has a very significant role to play in the selection of chiefs.

The svikiro plays a significant part also in the creation and maintenance of the balance between tribal (and even national) solidarity on the one hand and segmentation on the other. Within Shona society lineages are in a perpetual state of segmentation; at the same time the major tribal unit has to maintain its solidarity in order to maintain its tribal identity in opposition to other tribal groups.

The medium plays a significant part in this at the selection ceremonies for chiefs, and at times of national calamity and thanksgiving, when he interprets the wishes of the tribe as a whole.

The medium is also a diviner of social disasters, both national and personal, inasmuch as he interprets the wishes, the whims, the fancies and the displeasures of the shades.

The spirit medium is also a tribal prophet, and predicts, through the shades, the shape of things to come.

Different segments of the tribe have their own spirit medium. One will thus find mediums of varying importance within a tribal unit. This has prompted one researcher (Kingsley Garbett) to classify the spirit mediums into custodians of spirit realms embracing huge areas (in some cases as big as administrative provinces), spirit provinces, districts and parishes. These form a very convenient classification; one which is endorsed by my investigations. However, I consider it necessary to create one further tier above that of the Realm: this is the Commonwealth.

There are five main supraspirit Commonwealths and their attendant hierarchies. Each of these control a vast area. They are: The Matopos Mwari/Mlimo; Mutota/Nehanda; Chugumbi/Dzivaguri, Musikavanhu/Chapo and Nevana.

Conduct of the Spirit Medium's Seance

The spirit medium will gather about him a group of people who wish for one reason or another to communicate with the spirit members of the tribe. The ceremony is invariably attended by beer and music.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant feature of a session such as this is the fact that the atmosphere is paradoxically one of mixed awe and familiarity. (This is a feature of all Shona society and is typical, in many ways, of their approach to the chief). Awe is expressed and evident when the spirit medium is pronouncing the words of the ancestors. At the same time very often the audience will express amusement at the antics of the spirit medium. This may be due to the fact that nobody likes a masquerade more than the Shona, and he probably appreciates the fact that an awful lot of what the spirit medium is doing is a show put on for his benefit.

Nevertheless, he firmly believes, and so does the spirit medium, that he is embarking upon a communication with the shades of the departed.

Anyone may attend these seances, except in some cases Europeans. It has been my privilege, however, on many occasions to be admitted to spirit medium ceremonies, and what follows below is a compound of my experiences.

Children, old women, wives, mothers, men of all ranks, gather at the spirit medium's kraal. Much beer is brewed and consumed, and this may go on for several days. Throughout this period the spirit medium remains isolated in a hut with his musicmakers and acolytes. People will come and go, in and out of the hut, children crawling about between their feet, fowls pecking and scratching the dust outside.

Beer is taken into the inmates of the hut, and occasionally food*.

The whole atmosphere pervading the ceremony at this stage is one of mild anticipation, more like a family gathering. Perhaps the nearest parallel that can be drawn to the atmosphere of the crowd is to state that It Is similar to the one experienced by gatherings of Afrikaners at "nagtmal" a crowd of people gathered together by common bonds of friendship and kinship, out for a certain amount of enjoyment before getting down to the serious business of religious communion.

Throughout this time a band will have been playing. This almost invariably consists of a drum (ngomo), a flute and an "African piano" (mbira) and various other percussion instruments. The music is monotonous and repetitive, accentuated by a persistent and hypnotic beat. It never ceases.

Throughout this period the acolyte (nechombo) will be communicating with the spirit medium, and putting to him the company's questions and in turn repeating to them what the spirit medium has to say. This official has two names in Chishona the one, Nechombo, is the most commonly used. In the Sipolilo district it is also reported that this individual is called the mutapi.*

Ultimately, the spirit medium will go into a full trancelike state and become possessed by the spirit to which he is host. Those spirit mediums who have been closely observed by the writer, have without doubt passed into a form of trance which would appear to be an autohypnosis, derived from a period of prolonged hysteria, accompanied by hyperventilation.

It is now that the spirit medium begins to talk "with tongues", grunt like a lion, whistle and roar, and where the gobetween or acolyte has a significant role to play. The latter, incidentally, may be a young man, who in later years may very well become a medium himself this point needs a great deal more investigation. The acolyte will translate the words (sometimes coherent, at others apparent gibberish) of the shades as communicated to him by the spirit medium. How he does this, and how much imagination is employed how much connivance there is between the two before the session begins can only be guessed.

Suffice it to say that what occurs is accepted and believed by the vast majority of those people who adhere to the Shona form of religion.

When the spirit medium first becomes possessed the crowd will begin to go down on its knees and clap and ululate (uchira or hombera) out of respect for the mudzimu who is communicating with them through the spirit medium. While the mudzimu is using the medium of his body, the spirit medium himself takes on the authority and power of the mudzimu. This transformation is quite significant.

It is by this very transformation also that the spirit medium obtains his political influence within the tribal organisation.

Conclusion

Several things are immediately evident. One is that the power of the spirit medium is far greater than was officially accepted until a few years ago, and significantly this power has been increasing in recent years.*

The power of the spirit medium is both an aid and a hindrance to the chiefly power. Another point of significance is that by and large the spirit mediums are agents of national conservation, for it is upon conservative religion that their authority rests. It is upon the whole system of tribal nationalism, as opposed to "African nationalism", that they are established. They are, in fact, yet another manifestation of the kinship system, providing the link between the living and the deceased members of the various lineage groups.

The svikiro (spirit medium) must not be confused with the ngango (the witch doctor of popular parlance) whose function as herbalist and oracle to overcome illness and disaster is a very different one, employing different techniques and paraphernalia.

1. Pt. I 1973, p. 35-40. II 1974, p. 96-108.

2. It was observed that very little food is ever given to the spirit medium himself.

3. This title has peculiar significance; in other parts of the country mutapi means ruler or chief, and is derived from the verb kutapa to ravage, pillage, etc. which is also thought to be the origin of the title Monomutapu, Munhumutopu, etc.

4. This statement is made without any reservation as it is an observation based on personal experience and corroborated by other researchers in the field.

Polygyny among Urban Shona and Ndebele Christians

A Case Study

by G. L. Chavunduka'

(Editor's note: According to the Oxford English Dictionary polygamy denotes marriage with several spouses at once. Although the practice of one man having several wives is generally termed polygamy, the specific term for this form of polygamy is polygyny.)

Introduction

The introduction of Christianity, industrialisation and urbanisation has led to a decline in the number of polygynous marriages in Rhodesia. Many people have embraced Christianity which teaches the doctrine of one man, one wife. Moreover, many of the factors which favoured polygyny have disappeared.

In traditional Shona and Ndebele societies polygyny offered a number of advantages. When wars were still common, clans or tribal groups, which won these wars were usually those that among other things, had a good supply of human resources. Thus in order to have an adequate supply of manpower for the defence of the territory, society encouraged every grownup man to marry as many wives as he could afford and produce many children.

From the point of view of the men, polygyny offered several advantages. Plural marriage made farm work easier. Wives and children provided most of the labour needed for farm operations such as ploughing, planting, weeding, harvesting and looking after livestock. Then there was the prestige value of many wives. Since it is generally expensive to enter into plural marriage, a man's wives served as a measure of his wealth. Thus the more wives a man had the more society looked upon him as a man of wealth. In fact, some women were keen to become wives of polygynous men because of the belief that such men had the wealth to keep them happy. Children were also an important source of political power. In general men with many children and descendants were more likely to occupy positions of influence than those without. Lineages and clans were the building bricks of the political system. A man also looked to his children and other descendants for support in times of illhealth and old age. The larger the number of children the greater was the expectation and continuity of such social support. Some men entered into a plural union because of the sexual outlet offered by polygyny when continence was demanded during pregnancy and lactation. It was taboo for a husband to have sexual intercourse with his wife during the lactation period. Furthermore, the lactation period was long two to three years in many cases. There was no artificial milk for child feeding. Polygyny was also sometimes resorted to as a means of preventing divorce. If the relationship between a man and a woman became bad because of the woman's laziness or other reasons, she could be retained as a wife for some other quality of hers such as beauty, and another married for her industry. The rule of widow inheritance (levirate in the case of the Ndebele) also led to polygyny. When a man's brother died, society generally expected the surviving brother to look after the widow and her children.

Some women felt that there were some advantages in entering into a plural union. In the home the woman was expected to bear the whole of the domestic burden. Because of this, some married women urged their husbands to marry more wives so that they did not have to bear the whole of the domestic burden alone. Companionship was another advantage. In traditional society it was not necessary that husband and wife should share the same interests and activities or that they should be with each other all, or nearly all, of the time. A man was expected to seek companionship with his fellow men, and a woman with her fellow women. Thus for the sake of companionship some wives urged their husbands to bring another woman into the establishment. To some women the rule of widow inheritance also offered some advantages. It ensured continued social and economic security after the death of the husband. Partly because of this need for social and economic security some widows encouraged their husband's surviving brothers to enter into a husband-wife relationship with them.

Nowadays many of the advantages of polygyny have disappeared. The need to have many wives and children for the defence of the society has largely disappeared because of the absence of such wars. In farming children are no longer an economic asset in many areas.² Nowadays children, wherever possible, have to spend most of their time in school and after completing their education move into the towns and other employment centres in search of work. Many parents today pay school fees, often at great sacrifice, with the hope that their children later on will gain those urban jobs that now provide better financial rewards and prestige. Farming in many parts of the country is increasingly becoming unprofitable due partly to the diminishing amount of land, lack of finance, insecurity and poverty of soils. And since it is difficult nowadays for many men to provide good education for the children born of only one wife, many men refrain (usually because of the wife's concern for the children's education) from entering into a plural union because of the extra economic burden it would place upon them.

The economic inability of many men to support plural wives is another factor which has made monogamy more popular than polygyny. Many adult men are no longer selfemployed on their farms. They now work in towns and other employment centres as wage earners and depend for their livelihood largely on their wages which can barely meet the now numerous needs of modern society. Some wealthy men argue that polygyny would divert capital from more profitable uses such as investing it in business. In general economic wealth now confers more prestige than polygyny. In competition for modern jobs polygyny can sometimes restrict one's opportunities for social advancement. Some business managers, government officials and missionaries are not keen to hire or promote polygynous men mainly because of Christian education which has propagandised for a long time in favour of monogamy. Many employers also feel that chances of wanting a leave of absence from work to attend to family problems are greater among polygynous men than among monogamous workers.

New Forms of Polygyny

Although monogamy is now more popular than polygyny there are still a number of factors which favour plural marriage; factors which will be described below such as the strong desire for children, the rule of widow inheritance, family conflicts and poverty. These factors put many Christians in a dilemma. Faced with this situation some Christians have found some way of acquiring additional wives without abandoning their Christian faith. This takes two main forms.⁴ One form is where an additional wife is taken after all customary marriage obligations have been fulfilled. The man regards the new marriage as a temporary arrangement to be terminated when he has achieved his objective. The second form which is more common than the first, is what has become known as mapoto marriage. The term mapoto comes from the English word, "pots". The new form literally means, "cooking together" or "sharing pots". Although mapoto marriages are not registered, they are regarded as marriages by those involved.

They can be distinguished from ordinary love affairs in that the woman agrees to sexual fidelity in return for social or economic support although the man may have another wife. In an ordinary love affair a man may also want and expect his lover to be sexually

faithful, and she may be faithful or pretend to be so to please him, but the man has no authority to demand it. Urban "traditional" courts regard unfaithfulness on the part of a woman who has a mapoto marriage as adultery.⁶ Moreover, as in free marriages In Kampala described by Mandeville (1975) the man in a mapoto marriage must acknowledge any children born as his own. There is also emphasis that the partner is husband or wife and not a mere lover.

One factor which often leads to plural marriage among Christians is the strong desire for children. This is mainly a desire to have children, particularly male children, who will succeed the father after death, inherit his property and perpetuate his name and lineage. To many people absence of children causes more heartburning than anything else.

One consequence of this strong desire for children is the great temptation on the part of many Christian men nowadays to try and prove before marriage that the girl they are about to marry is fertile. In other words, while a polygynist could tolerate one barren wife, it is much more essential nowadays for a man to ensure that his one wife is fertile. Although there are no figures which indicate the percentage of women who now enter Christian marriage already pregnant, the number of such women could well be rising. Sterility on the part of the husband although shameful is not generally regarded as a sufficient cause for the dissolution of marriage. In the past the husband could make a secret arrangement with a close relative to impregnate his wife in his name. Many people no longer accept this device and as a result relations between husband and wife may in some cases become intolerable because of the man's failure to satisfy his wife sexually and may result in the dissolution of the contract.

Other Christian men do not try to prove before marriage that the girl they are about to marry is fertile. However, should the woman prove to be barren after marriage the temptation to divorce her is often very great. Many such marriages end in divorce. Before taking this action many Christians in this position often consult traditional and scientific medical specialists in an attempt to improve their chances of getting children.

Some Christian men who are married to barren wives do not divorce them. But faced on the one hand with the great urge to have children and on the other with the church's ruling on polygyny, many Christians in this position often find some way of producing the desired children without abandoning their Christian faith. They generally do this by taking a leave of absence from the church, and devote a few years of their lives to the production of children. For this an additional wife is acquired. The man regards the new marriage as a temporary arrangement to be terminated when he has achieved his objective of getting a reasonable number of children.

Take the case of J who married his first wife in 1942. This wife is barren. In 1949 J married another wife with whom he produced two children. This marriage was dissolved in 1956, J told me that he found it difficult as a Christian to continue with his second marriage. The children have been adopted by his childless first wife. Today J is a leading member of his church and also an active member of the Moral Rearmament Association.

Another example is that of G, a prosperous businessman and a member of the Methodist Church. His legal wife has seven children all girls. What forced G to look for another woman was the desire to have at least one son who will inherit his property and name. The second wife who now has one son lives in another part of town some distance away from the first wife. No bridewealth has been paid for the second marriage. G's first wife as well as other kinsmen know about the second marriage.

The rule of widow inheritance is another factor which may lead to some form of polygyny among Christians. As mentioned earlier, when a man's brother dies, society generally expects the surviving brother to look after the widow and her children. Pressure from kinsmen (some of whom may not be Christians) to make the relationship between the man and his dead brother's wife strong, is often very great. The widow too, partly because of the need for social and economic security, may encourage her husband's surviving brother to enter into a husbandwife relationship with her. Some relatively wealthy widows encourage their husband's surviving brother to enter into a husbandwife relationship with them because of the desire to remain with their children. Refusal to be inherited by the husband's surviving kinsman can mean separation between the widow and her children. The widow may (although this is not often done nowadays) be sent back to her family of origin while the children remain with their father's kinsmen. If the man is of little faith he may be forced to work out an arrangement whereby the relationship with the widow is strengthened without placing his Christian identity in an embarrassing position.

All close kinsmen of the widow's husband may, of course, refuse to inherit her. In this case the widow remains with her children or may remarry. On the other hand some relatively wealthy widows who want to retain their social identity avoid actual inheritance by appointing their sons as their future "husbands". This device is acceptable and some Christian women use it nowadays.'

The case of L is a good example of how the rule of widow inheritance often presents a dilemma among Christian men and women. L been a leading member of the Anglican church for over ten years. He is a very successful carpenter. He is married and has seven children. During the last three years he has been maintaining his dead brother's wife. In fact, people around them now regard the widow as the man's second wife. This relationship is not known by many members of L's church as the widow lives at a place remote from that of his legal wife. In his community L poses as a monogamist. He told me that as a Christian he did not want to live with his brother's wife as husband and wife, but pressure from some of his kinsmen and the widow herself was so strong that he had to show his Christian charity by agreeing to the arrangement.

Serious family disagreements may also lead to some form of polygyny among Christians. Today as in traditional society polygyny, or at least some form of it, is sometimes resorted to as a means of stabilising marriage. Some men believe that if a wife has a rival she does her best to please the man in order to retain his love which would otherwise be transferred to her rival.

Polygyny may, of course, create family problems as well. An internal family struggle may develop between one wife and her children on one side, and another wife and hers on the other. Inheritance problems may arise as well as sexual jealousies and adultery, but many marriages, too, have been saved by it.

O, who was a supervisor in a business firm in Salisbury for thirty one years also had a mapoto marriage for seventeen years. He told me that his first wife "is a troublemaker". They could not get on well together particularly during the early years of their marriage. The first wife lived at their rural home while O lived in town with the other wife. The mapoto marriage has now been terminated and O now lives at his rural home in retirement.

Economic difficulties nowadays may lead to plural marriage. This happened in the case of R, who until 1976 was a lorry driver in Salisbury. S, his legal wife lives at their rural home with their four children. They married in 1960. In 1972 R established a mapoto marriage with S who had just completed her nursing training at Harare Hospital in Salisbury. S is now a nursing sister and receives a relatively good salary. She didn't know that R had another wife until early 1975 after the birth of her daughter. By 1976 R and P had saved enough money between them to open a butchery shop in the rural area which is now being run by S. S told me, "Had I not married P, I would be in very serious financial problems today. My children would never have gone to school. Although my first wife was mad when she heard about now she is happy because she runs our butchery"

Other reasons which appear to force some Christian men into a plural union are, interest in some other woman, loneliness, and reluctance on the part of some divorcees and widowers to contract another Christian marriage.

O, a senior clerk in a transport firm established another union because of his love for J. He married his first wife in the Methodist church in 1958. They have five children. He began living with his second wife J a divorcee in 1970. He does not intend to have any children with this second wife. In the case of X, loneliness appears to have played a part in the establishment of his second union. He loves his first wife who lives with their seven children in the rural area about 100 kilometres from Salisbury. He told me that he could only visit his first wife about two or three times a year. The last example is that of M who established a mapoto marriage because of his reluctance to contract another Christian marriage at least for the time being.⁸ He has been living with N as husband and wife for over four years. They have two children. He divorced his first wife in 1969.

It should be pointed out that men do not always acquire the additional wives described above without the knowledge of their Christian wives. In fact, in some cases the Christian wife may be in sympathy with the husband, particularly where she is barren, and so may tacitly give her blessing to the husband's practice, and connive at whatever he does in this respect. One woman living in the rural areas told me that she doesn't mind what her husband does in town as long as she receives financial support enough for her and others living with her. T's first wife made the same point. She did not oppose his second marriage because as she put it, "it was my fault. I only have one child. I can't produce any

more children. The second wife will produce more children for us".⁹ Some women who are opposed to polygyny succeed in preventing their husband from marrying a second wife. A Christian wife can, in fact, succeed in an action for divorce on the grounds of adultery in the Rhodesian Courts (Child, 1965; p. 57) if her husband takes another wife without her consent.

Many Christian women agree to enter into these unions for a number of reasons. Some do so because they consider themselves incapable of securing a good Christian marriage. These are women who may have had children out of wedlock or consider themselves too ugly to find a suitable young man. A's case is a good example of this behaviour. She was made pregnant by one of her teachers before she completed her primary school education. The teacher refused to marry her. After the birth of her child, A moved into Salisbury and eventually obtained a job as a shop assistant. She now lives with a man as husband and wife, in a mapoto marriage. The man has another wife. A told me that she had lost hope of ever having a Christian marriage because single men are reluctant to take on responsibility for a woman's children by a previous marriage.

Other Christian women agree to marry or live with Christian polygynists because of their age. They fear that if they remain unmarried, they may be exposed to contempt in the society. To many women it is better to be married to a polygynist than not to be married at all. Thirtyfour years old Y gave this as her reason for agreeing to establish a mapoto marriage. Some women agree to marry polygynists in the hope that the first wife will eventually be divorced. This expectation is usually the result of the man's promises. Sophia who has a mapoto marriage reported that her husband had promised to divorce his first wife within a year of their mapoto marriage. "He has not done so after eight years of marriage; in any case it is useless now because I already have two children with him". Some young Christian girls are cheated by polygynists. C who now has three children with a polygynist reported that she had fallen in love with him while she was doing a nursing course at Harare Hospital. The man told her that he was single. She discovered after the birth of her daughter that the man had a wife and three children living in the rural area. A large number of women married to polygynists are divorcees and widows who want social and economic support even for a limited period.¹⁰ Many divorcees express reluctance to enter into a more formal union again. They know that a formal marriage does not guarantee a secure future. One woman with a mapoto marriage boasted that she was much happier than most women who have Christian marriages.

Some women mentioned the desire to retain their social identity, freedom, and equality with the husband as reasons which make mapoto marriage more attractive than formal Christian marriage. One woman said, "I am happy as things are now, because I am free to do whatever I want in a mapoto marriage". Another said there was "equal responsibility in matters related to clothing, food and so on in a mapoto marriage". And E, a school teacher said she didn't like a legal Christian marriage, "because it ties the woman to the man thus making her subservient". These replies are an indication of the changing position of women in Shona and Ndebele societies.

When faced with a choice between customary and mapoto marriage, older working or professional women who intend to spend most of their lives in town, generally prefer mapoto marriage. In a mapoto marriage as mentioned by the three informants above, the woman largely retains her social identity. Relations between husband and wife are also more equal than those in a Christian or customary marriage. Another advantage in a mapoto marriage is that the woman need not be greatly concerned with maintaining good, orderly relations with kin and she is also less attached to the value and practices of traditional rural life.

Terminating the husbandwife relationship described above is not always easy. Some remain married for life. In some cases the marriage may become so strong that the legal Christian wife is eventually abandoned. In some Christian churches the man may then have a Christian wedding again with the second wife.

There are three courses of action open to the father of a woman who has entered into a mapoto marriage. He can demand bridewealth in order to make the marriage more formal. Some parents succeed in obtaining such bridewealth. But since formalization of the marriage may not be in the interests of the husband or wife or both, many men with mapoto wives avoid, by using a number of techniques, the payment of bridewealth. The most common technique is to promise to pay the bridewealth in the near future. This promise can and is often made a number of times as years go by." Parents know this and have devised their own techniques of forcing men living with their daughters to pay the bridewealth. They are not always successful. The most common method used by parents to force their sons-in-law to pay the bridewealth is to impound their daughters and their children until the sons-in-law produce the bridewealth.¹² I's father tried this method without much success. He took Irene to his home leaving her husband alone. I's husband knew it was a trick to get him to pay bridewealth. He did not follow his wife. After about three months Irene ran away from her father's home and returned to her husband. No further attempts have been made by Irene's father to recover the bridewealth.

Urban "traditional" courts are usually more successful in getting the husband to pay the bridewealth than are the parents. When disputes arise in a mapoto marriage, they can only be referred to kinsmen or to the urban "traditional" courts. (The district commissioners' courts as well as magistrates' courts do not recognise mapoto marriages as valid marriages in terms of government legislation). In the course of the trial the traditional courts usually force the husband to pay the bridewealth or damages if this matter is brought to their attention.

The other course of action open to the parents of a woman who has established a mapoto marriage is to sue for damages. Many parents, however, do not claim for damages because their own daughters may be opposed to such payments. Moreover daughters may use a number of techniques to frustrate the efforts of their parent to recover the damages. This is because payment of damages is not always in the interest of the husband or wife or both. An example of this is the case of R. She had a child with a Christian polygynist. They had a mapoto marriage. When her father and other kinsmen demanded damages, R by prior agreement with her husband argued to her parents that she was unsure about the

paternity of the child since she had a number of lovers. No further attempts were made by her father to demand damages.

The last course of action open to the parents of a woman who has established a mapoto marriage is to accept the marriage as such and refrain from making any claims for bridewealth or damages. In many cases the payment of bridewealth or damages will lead to the breakup of the marriage. It has already been pointed out that the attraction of mapoto marriage as far as Christian polygynists are concerned is the expectation of impermanence. To many Christian women, particularly widows and divorcees mapoto marriage permits the pleasures and comforts of a legal Christian union without its constraints. R, whose marriage has been mentioned above stated this point very clearly. Her father wanted her husband to pay damages. R frustrated this attempt. She told me: "If allow my father to claim damages this may lead to the breakup of the marriage. My husband will take away the child after paying the damages, and stop supporting me and my three children by a previous marriage as he is doing at present."

Although many men with mapoto marriages are reluctant to pay bridewealth, they remain an important economic asset to their wife's parents throughout the duration of their mapoto marriages. Many men send gifts of clothes, food and money to the woman's parents from time to time. One man whose two daughters are married one by Christian rites and the other established a mapoto marriage, told me that he was now more fond of the husband of the second daughter. Further investigations showed that the husband of the daughter with a mapoto marriage is a fairly wealthy man. He has built an expensive house for his father-in-law and sends him cash gifts from time to time.

Rationalisations and Techniques of Neutralisation

The question of how people who apparently uphold in theory the monogamous Christian teaching on marriage manage to depart from it in practice has not yet been fully explained. In other words we must ask how some Christians manage to avoid the impact of their Christian commitments.

There are a number of techniques of neutralisation which make such deviant behaviour possible, as well as rationalisations which protect the individual from self-blame and the blame of other Christians. One way of reducing self-blame and the disapproval of other Christians has already been mentioned; that is, talking leave of absence from the church. A Christian who enters into a plural union is regarded as having broken or betrayed his faith. He is denied certain rights which are the prerogatives of practising Christians. In order to reduce the impact of such disapproval the Christian polygynist makes it clear that the plural marriage is a temporary arrangement to be terminated as soon as he has achieved his objective of getting a reasonable number of children. The man argues that he has the opportunity of reforming his life at any time and becoming a good Christian again before he dies. In doing this, as Egboh (1973) points out the disapproval of self is reduced in effectiveness. There are many people who have abandoned polygyny and have become active members of the church.

A technique used by other Christians is what Sykes and Matza (1957) have called the denial of responsibility. In this case the individual defines himself as lacking responsibility for his deviant actions. He sees himself as helplessly propelled into a new situation. By so doing the disapproval of self or others is sharply reduced in effectiveness as a restraining influence.

The case mentioned earlier of L is a good example of this. He is a leading member of the Anglican church. He is married and has seven children. During the last three years he has also been maintaining his dead brother's wife. In fact, they now regard each other as husband and wife. L told me that as a Christian he did not want to live with his brother's widow as husband and wife, but pressure from some of his kinsmen and the widow herself was so strong that he had to show his Christian charity by agreeing to the arrangement. Many women use this technique as well. The woman blames the man for propelling her into this situation. As one woman put it, "it is my husband's responsibility. What could I do as a woman". A man who entered into a mapoto marriage told me that his barren Christian wife urged him to take another wife so that they might have children. The man argued that he has not abandoned Christianity.

The other technique used to reduce selfblame and the blame of other Christians is to shift the responsibility for the behaviour onto the ancestors. The individual sees himself in a dilemma that must be resolved. On the one hand there is the church which teaches the doctrine of one man, one wife, and on the other hand there are the ancestors who may be offended in the case of failure to produce children who will perpetuate the lineage and clan. Faced with this situation the individual accords precedence to the believed demands of the ancestors while not rejecting the Christian doctrine. An example of this is the case of T whose Christian wife is barren. In town where he works he has another wife. He now has three children with his second wife. His first wife lives in the rural area. T me that the views of the ancestors are just as important as those of the church. "If I don't produce children the ancestors will be angry with me. They want descendants. I still want to be a Christian, but I must also please my ancestors".

A technique of neutralisation used by some men and women involves the condemnation of those who appear to be upholding the monogamous Christian teaching on marriage both in theory and practice. In this case the individual claims that others are hypocrites. One informant told me, "at least my husband and I are doing it publicly. We have not attempted to hide our mapoto marriage. There are many church men who have concubines, and many church women with boy friends. I know some of them". Thus by attacking others the wrongfulness of her own behaviour is then more easily repressed.

This does not mean that Christian women who have established mapoto or customary unions do not attach any value to Christian marriage. In fact, most of them do.

Conclusion

in conclusion it should be stated that there are many Shona and Ndebele Christians who uphold both in theory and practice the monogamous Christian teaching on marriage. But

there are some who have lapsed into polygyny, others enter into some form of polygyny but hope to become active members of the church again when they have terminated their second marriage. This paper has been concerned with this last group.

The rationalisations and techniques of neutralisation that some people employ when they have departed from the church's ruling by acquiring additional wives are important in lessening the effectiveness of social control. This does not mean, however, that such people do not have feelings of guilt and shame when called upon to account for their deviant behaviour. Many often do.

1 I have benefited greatly from the Zambian, Zululand and Iboland studies of marriage by Gluckman 1960, Mitchell 1963. and Egboh 1973.

2 There is some evidence from Cheater (1974, p. 41) which indicates that children may still be an important source of labour in some commercial farming areas. In terms of cost, it is more profitable, to be a polygynist In the commercial farming areas than to be a monogamist. Labour costs In the farms studied by Cheater were in general, highest for monogamous farm owners and lowest for polygynlst farm owners.

4 This is not to say there are no businessmen with plural wives. Some wealthy men have plural marriages.

5 The research on which this article is based was carried out in one urban township in Salisbury, Rhodesia in 1976. Some of this material was collected by Mr. C. Murombedzi and Mr. T. Katandawa who were research assistants in the department of Sociology. University of Rhodesia. Thirtyfour marriages were studied. I am grateful to them and to Prof. D. H. Reader for their help and advice. I am also grateful to my colleagues Dr. A. P. Cheater and Dr. M. C. Dembetembe for their comments arid editorial help. A promise by the suitor to pay bridewealth was and still is in many areas essential for a marriage to be recognised as valid under Shona and Ndebele law. However, among urban populations nowadays the mere presentation of the woman to the man's close kinsmen is sufficient to make the marriage valid.

6 One traditional court which operates in an urban setting is the Hunyani Sabuku's Court in St. Mary's Township, Salisbury. At the court a man with a mapoto marriage was successful in suing his wife's lover for damages (Patrick v. Bernard, 18.9.77).

7 The African Wills Act (Chapter 108) has altered the status of women to a certain extent. The Act allows anyone who has been married by civil rites to make provision by will for the guardianship of his children on his death, even it such provision is contrary to African law. A husband may also bequeath the property to his wife. If a husband makes no such provision, however, African customary law applies.

8 This is not a plural marriage. It has been included, however, because it is a departure from the Christian teaching on marriage.

9 Women with little education are more likely to have this attitude than highly educated women.

10 The courts have decreed that a divorced woman (and a widow) is free to remarry without her guardian's consent, as her previous marriage had the effect of freeing her from the patria potestas (Child, 1965, p. 21).

11 Tribal courts can entertain actions for damages arising from a breach of promise.

12 Under Shona and Ndebele law the children belong to the woman's kin group until bridewealth has been paid. But nowadays partly because of the expense involved in bringing up children, guardianship and custody of children is not always claimed particularly in urban areas.

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The Chiota Dynasty

by Michael Gelfand and Mrs Joan Henry

The Chiota Tribal Trust land is situated in the Marandellas district and is about 66 000 hectares in extent. On its boundaries are the Nyarusheshe River, Waddilove, the Umfuli River, Muda purchase land and the Nyatsime River. According to legend, the name Chiota derives from the time when Tunha and his relatives were hunting. They found a certain type of yam called hota which they began to eat. A group of young girls arrived and asked

Murikudyei?" (What are you eating?) Tunha replied, "Tirikudya hota" (We are eating hota). From then on Tunha and his people were known as Chiota (hota eaters).

History of the Chieftainship

The first chief was called Tunha and was a son of Chiwazwe of Manyika,

the brother of Mutasa (See table). Chiwazwe originally entered Chiota when on an elephant hunt and settled down in this part, where Tunha was born. Chiwazwe married two women from Nyandoro, the first wife being Nhondo and the second Baya. Nhondo gave birth to a son, Chakabvapasi, a few hours before Baya gave birth to Tunha. Chiwazwe was informed of Tunha's birth first and he was therefore accorded the birthright over Chakabvapasi.

Tunha's first son was Bindu and the second Mudzudzu. Bindu succeeded his father as chief and after Bindu's death, Mudzudzu followed as chief. When Mudzudzu died, his son, Chishambwe, succeeded him. A son of the Bindu family was not chosen as chief because he had gone to stay with the Varozwi.

When Chishambwe died the chieftainship passed on to his brother, Zimheni. After Zimheni's death, Manjanga, who was a son of Bindu, became chief. Manjanga's wife was Zumondo, originally the wife of another of Bindu's sons, Gwiranenyika. Manjanga was killed by a lion and it was alleged that the lion was sent by Chidende of the Mudzudzu family. Chidende was given a trial by ordeal (muteyo) but he vomited and so was declared innocent. Later, Chidende, due to this false accusation, refused to become she (chief) and also to inherit Zumondo.

The sons of Bindu were afraid of becoming chief as they had accused Chidende of killing Manjanga. Chipitiri, son of Munhumunwe, one of the non who came to hunt with Chiwazwe, became chief in a caretaker capacity. He did not belong to the imbahuru (royal family). Chidende and his relative, Chihunga, killed Chipitiri as he should not have been ishe (chief).

After this Manjanga's son, Nzwere, succeeded. When Nzwere died, Pasipamire, the great grandson of Bindu, was installed as chief. Savanhu, son of Nzwere, followed Pasipamire.

He was also of the Bindu family as in Mudzudzu's family there were two sons before Bindu's family.

With Savanhu's death in 1927, Zihohwa, the great grandson of Chaka bvapasi, became chief. Until now the sons of the second wife, Baya, had succeeded to the chieftainship, but Zihohwa was of the first wife's family. This change in selection took place because Zihohwa had complained that in their family they had had no turn of becoming chief and the Rev. John White of Waddilove approached the Native Commissioner, F. Posselt.

When Zihohwa died, Chakanetsa, son of Pasipamire, of the Bindu family, became chief in 1946. He died in 1952 and was followed by Mutero after a delay of some four years.

In 1927 when Savanhu (of the Bindu family) died, Mutero was nearly made chief. His mother's brother and Mazhazha (Chief Nyandoro, Mutero's uncle) stopped the appointment as it was thought that Mutero was too young, and Zihohwa was appointed instead.

When the selection of the new chief was being made after Chaka netsa's death, Mutero himself went to see the Native Commissioner. He presented his case, pointing out that Bindu's family had had more than fair share of chiefs and that he was anxious to become chief as this office was due to fall to the family of Mudzudzu. He had been superseded by Zihohwa and Chakanetsa.

Mutero received a letter from the Native Commissioner at a time when he was still running his store at Wedza. The Native Commissioner subsequently told him that the Government wished him to be the ishe (chief of Chiota). When Mutero left the Native Commissioner he asked him to let him know the date on which he was to be installed so that he could brew beer for the people. The date fixed was the 4th October, 1956. In all, it took about four years from the time of the death of Chakanetsa until Mutero was officially installed as chief. There had been much quarrelling among rival claimants. Mutero had brought a mombe (ox) to the late chief, village on his death, but there were also others who had done likewise to demonstrate their claims, and who were from both the Bindu and Mudzudzu families. There were also claimants who had not brought a mombe.

Bindu and Mudzudzu are the two royal families (dzimbahuru) in the Chiota area from whom a chief is chosen. Men of the Bindu family have had more turns than those of the Mudzudzu family, having had five turns before the Mudzudzu family succeeded to the chieftainship. Their names were Bindu, Manjanga, Nzwere, Pasipamire and Chakanetsa. The reason for this is that the family is a much larger one than that of Mudzudzu.

The Selection and Installation of the Chief

The muzukuru (nephew) used to install the chief but this function has now been taken over by the Administration. The big muzukuru was called Marowa. His mother was Rambe, a sister of Mudzudzu, the younger brother of Bindu. Rambe married a man called

Marowa from Chiwero and his mutupochidao (totem) was Shava Mwendamberi. The name of the main muzukuru (nephew) is always Marowa, and when there is no rain, Chiota the chief gives him a mombe which is killed at the grave of Nyemba, the sister of Chiwazwe. (When Chiwazwe went hunting he left his sister, Nyemba, at a village, the chief at the time being Gunguho. This man raped Nyemba and when Chlwazwe returned and heard what had happened, he killed Gunguho with the help of Nyandoro's people).

The people of Chiota first go to the grave of Chiwazwe as he is the founder or owner (muridzi wenyika) of the land, but he is not the mhondoro (tribal spirit). This spirit actually comes from the son, Tunha. Today there is no svikjro (medium) for Tunha, although it is expected that a medium may be found at any time.

When the chief of Chiota dies, Marowa goes to the svikiro with those who want to be chief, to learn what the possessed person has to declare. In Chiota there are, however, a number who will claim the chieftainship and bring a mombe to mourn the ishe's death. In the days before the coming of the white man fighting took place between clans and also between the two families of Bindu and Mudzudzu over the chieftainship. It was not uncommon for an imba (house) to call in the aid of another chief outside Chiota, such as Nyandora, to help fight the rival imba which staked a claim to the chieftainship.

The big muzukuru (nephew) does not recommend or put forward the name of the new chief. His main duty is to pray at the grave (guva) of Nyemba, the woman who was raped and to honour her spirit. The duty of putting toward and accepting the name of the new chief rests in the hands of the District Commissioner (formerly Native Commissioner). Before this, the muzukuru would consult with Tunha through the svikiro (tribal medium) about the chieftobe. Chief Mutero referred to the Native Commissioner as the svikiro in function. He also mentioned in passing, an instance where Chingwanangwana who was selected by the svikiro (medium) to be chief, was not accepted by the Native Commissioner and Marufu was appointed instead. However, with Mutero, there has been no svikiro for a long time in his chieftainship (Nyoka). Chingwaro was the svikiro at the time of Chief Zihohwa and although he had said before he died that Mutero should follow, the Administrator, on the advice of the Rev. John White, appointed Chakanetsa.

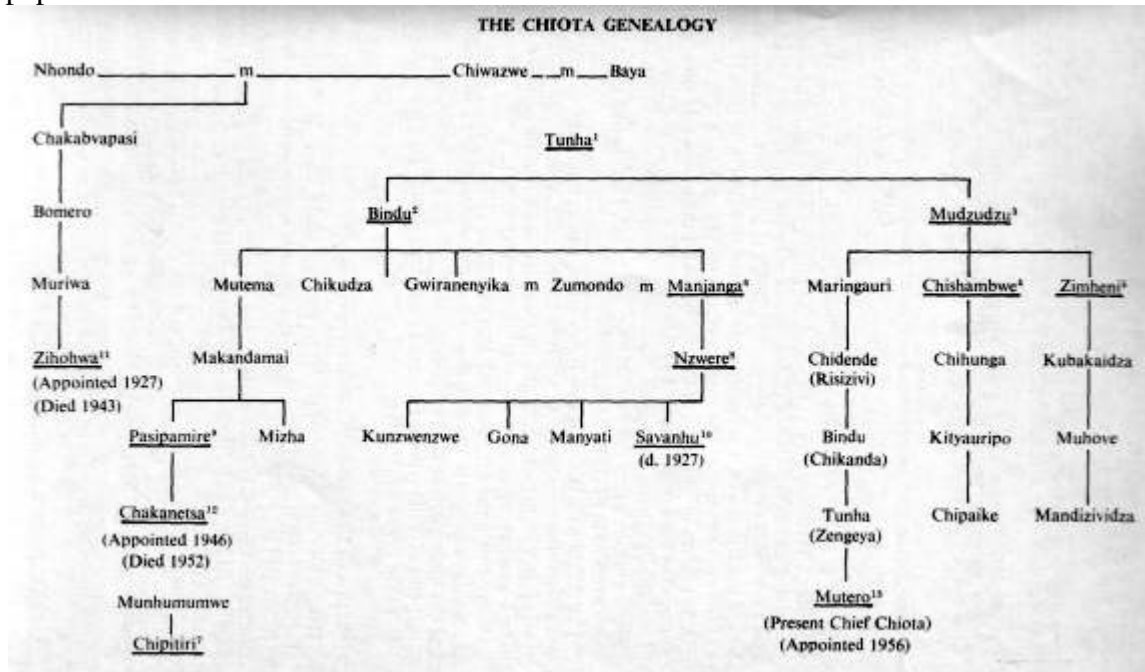
The day after the death of a chief, his brothers and sons report to the District Commissioner, who arranges with them who is to be the acting chief until a successor is appointed. In Chiota messengers are sent to the machinda (councillors) and masadunhu (subchiefs) informing them of the death of their chief. The masadunhu are men of good reputation who could be given the charge of an area or province. The sadunhu (head man or ward head) is appointed by the chief and can be of the same mutupo (totem) as the clan, or he might have come to settle from outside the nyika (chiefdom). The sadunhu can hold a dare (tribal court) at which certain civil cases could be heard by him. He continues in his appointment till death, retaining his post when a chief dies and serving under the new chief when appointed.

It has been suggested that Chiwazwe was the first chief, but according to the present chief of Chiota, Mutero himself, Chiwazwe was simply a hunter and his son, Tunha, was

installed as the first chief. It has also been said that Chikudza and Gwiranenyika, sons of Bidu, were chiefs, but they are not mentioned as such in the geneology given by Mutero.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Chief Chiota and Mr. P. Nyandora for the help given in producing this paper.



Gotosa, Nyangwa and the Legend of the Land Taboo

by C. E. Shand

When one works from day to day, lives, discusses, jokes together with primitive tribesmen, such as those of the Mkota Chieftainship, one tends to develop an appreciation of their forms of entertainment. What could be more enjoyable than to sit, alfresco by the fire in the evening, with one or two of the tribesmen, and watch their sad and tired old eyes sparkle back to life as they gaze into the past, almost as if they could see it as clear as day, and relate to you some of the stories which they were told when still young. One such story was that of their ancestor, Gotosa, and the legend of Nyangwa's spiritual power.

Before we drift into the past with my old friend, I would like to let you know some of the past Mkota history.

The Mkota people are of the Tonga tribe, being, relatively, one of the more primitive peoples in Rhodesia, whose diets are still largely supplemented with many indigenous

plants, roots and small animals, such as mice, lizards and monkeys. The present Mkota tribal area is in the extreme northeast of Rhodesia, bounded by the Mazoe river in the north, the Mozambique border in the east, the main SalisburyTete road in the south, and the Kudzwe river in the west.

It is said that the tribe originated in Zambia and migrated into the area which they found unoccupied.

Gotosa and the Strength of His Tribal Spirit

Gotosa was the 7th Chief in the lineage and came from the first house Mudzukwa (of which the present Chief Thomas is a member).

It was said that the Midzimu (spirits) of that day were very strong. Any misfortune arose only from neglect of one's Midzimu and any needs of the people could be met by their Midzimu who could perform many Mishamiso (wonders) for them.

One year the rains did not come, and the drought caused much starvation. Even the roots, leaves and rodents which contributed to their subsistence were in short supply. The cries of starvation were carried to Gotosa.

The Mhondoro (tribal spirit) had to be consulted and so Gotosa instructed the Muzukuru we umambo (his sister's eldest son, who is Master of Ceremonies) to prepare consultation of the Mhondoro with spiritual beer at the Modzimbahwe (spiritual shrines on the sacred mountain near his home). This mountain, being sacred, could only be climbed by those guided by the Mhondoro.

On completion of the ceremony the Masvikiro returned with the message that the Mhondoro had heard their cries and had accepted their beer. He said that the many Miuyu (baobab or cream of tartar trees) in the area would bear a fruit, Mauyu, in a hard pod. They were to crack these and boil the fruit in water to make a porridge and the black baobab seeds could also be extracted and cracked open and the kernels eaten too (apparently high in protein).

The remainder of the beer was drunk and the old women (those who could no longer bear children) did traditional dances and smeared Masese (dregs of the African beer) on each others' faces, these being the dances of the Mhondoro at the end of the ceremony where the women roar and scratch like lions and a certain distinctive drum is used with a rapid tnbeat; pause; tnbeat; described by my old friend as "gogogo, gogogo".

And so it was that the people would no longer suffer hunger in times of drought.

Nyangwa's Power and the Land Taboo

Nyangwa, who was the sister of Gotosa, was also the Svikiro of a strong spirit which proclaimed itself a Mhondoro (lion or tribal spirit). When she was possessed the spirit

spoke in a man's voice, denouncing the Chief's Masvikiro as being imposters and claiming that Gotosa was not the rightful Chief, but wrongly chosen by the false Masvikiro.

When the elders demanded a consultation of the Mhondoro beer was brewed and consecrated to the tribal spirit. When the Masvikiro were possessed the Mhondoro was said to roar in anger, divining Nyangwa as being a witch, and that she should be exiled to beyond the Vombosi.

But Nyangwa's spirit was strong so she fled to the sacred mountain, to the Madzimbahwe where only the Masvikiro could find her.

It was said that those pursuing her were spat at by the cobras she sent and were blinded, unable to see the steep slopes of the mountain and fell to their deaths. The Mhondoro was consulted again and it was instructed that beer was to be brewed and they were to take the Nevanje ("he to whom the sand will be given by the Mhondoro"). During the ceremony for installation of a chief, he is given medicated soil to hold representing the land he is given to tonga (rule)). The Nevanje was to be shaven bald (a ceremony often done by njangas) whereupon he would be able to capture Nyangwa without being harmed, for the spirits which had chosen him would protect him.

When Nyangwa was captured, she was driven across the Vombosi river by the men of the tribe. Nyangwa, in her anger, cursed the land over the Vombosi river, on which she was standing, claiming that any man of the Mkota tribe who set foot there would die and his spirit be lost.

My old friend's eyes dimmed as he gazed into the fire and stirred the coals for more warmth. "The spirits don't have the strength they once had," he sighed, "today's youth only think of smart clothes, European beer and more money."

2/ On checking the genealogy chart I found the successor to Gotosa to be listed as Jigu. When asking one of the tribal elders about him, I was told his name, Jigu, was not his true name, but a nickname. It meant, in the old Tonga language "To lift up one's head". He was said to have been given the name because in a ceremony before he was a Chief he was told to lift up his head to be shaven.

Could this Jigu be the Nevanje in the story of Nyangwa who was shaven bald before capturing her?

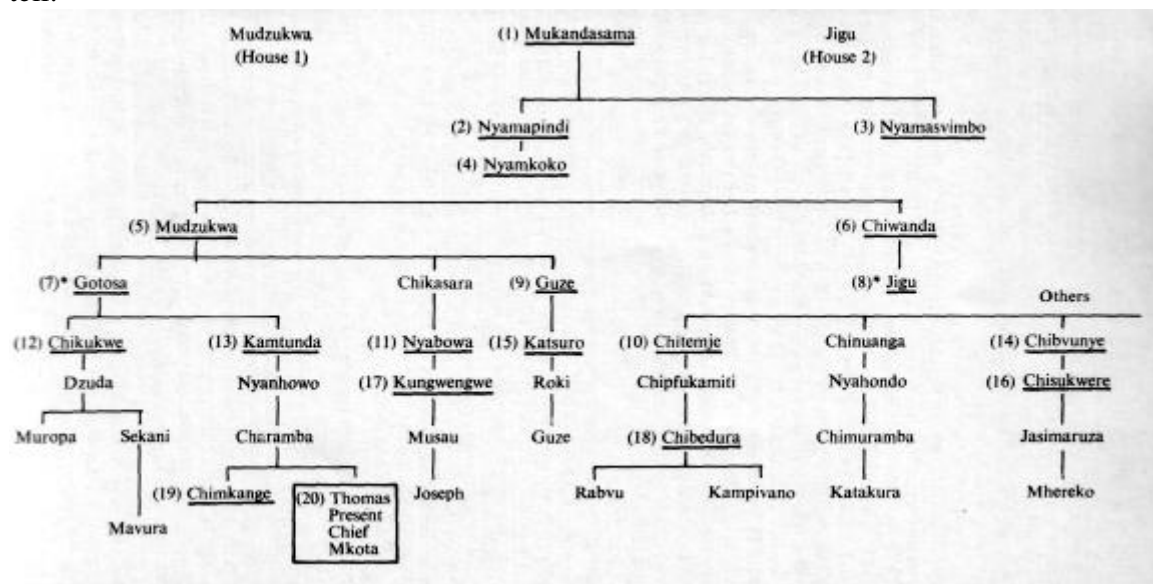
I have noted two interesting things in our modern day and age that could be connected to this story of Nyangwa.

(a) There is a mountain range near the river Nyangombe, a few kilometres from the present chief's traditional home. It is called the Nyangwa Range and is very steep and heavily wooded (grid reference VS854463). It is taboo for tribesmen to climb the

mountain, and it is said that Gotosa, who is now regarded as the head tribal spirit, was buried there.

fb) During the Protected Village programme of 1976, the Chief was moved from his home near the Mazoe river (Nyakuku) to Msau P.V. and the shrines were also moved and remade a short distance from the P.V. site. However, a lack of water at Msau made completion of the P.V. impossible, so the people were moved across the Vombosi river to Kondo in late '76 and early '77. In 1977, however, when it was time for the annual appeasement of the spirits for rain, the Chief asked permission to cross back over the Vombosi to Msau, to carry out the ceremony. He said it was impossible to reconstruct the shrines at Kondo. When asked why he claimed that only the spirits knew, and he could not tell me. Could it be true that Nyangwa had cursed the land across the Vombosi? Could a curse so long ago still affect the spirits of the tribesmen who lived in her time?

People's lives are said to be governed by their beliefs, and fear of the supernatural. Are there such things as spirits? Did such things really take place? Or are we, as human beings, just affected by what can be described as too vivid an imagination? One never can tell.



The African Sky

by F. W. J. McCosh

It was the Nuer of the southern Sudan who frequently asked Europeans whether an aeroplane ever touches the sky.' The sky as a solid vault which joined the earth at the horizon was a common idea throughout the continent, the Ronga of Mocambique suggesting that at the horizon maize was pounded in a kneeling position, there being no room to stand upright, but that pestles could be rested against the sky.' Generally, the Shona believed that it was possible to touch the sky at the horizon but some shared the

medieval European view of the danger of falling down a bottomless precipice.³ For the Zulu and the Ronga a twoway traffic between sky and earth was possible by plaited ropes suspended from the vault. Creation myths generally postulate a solid sky as with the Pedi of the Transvaal whose Creator, Huveane, returned, after fashioning the earth, by driving pegs into the sky⁴ as a mountaineer might ascend an overhanging rock. Reports of meteorites possibly gave credence to the concept of a solid sky which opened to allow rain to fall.

The Sun

In traditional Africa the sun was a timepiece, and wellknown is the telling of time by its position in the sky or its position with relation to terrestrial objects as in the Shona phrase *zuva ragara mit!*, the sun stays in the trees, and *zuva raro va nhongony'n'a*, the sun strikes the top of the hill, which can be compared with its use by North American Indians as in 'the sun is above the trees the distance of a thumb and middle finger stretch', or 'the breadth of my hand above the trees'.⁵ It follows that the position of shadows also indicated the times of starting and stopping tasks, as the Shona mother tells her child, 'Tarisa mwana'ngu mumvuri wasvika apo, saka chigadzirira tiende kumunda.'

'Look, my child, the shadow has reached there, so get ready to go to the field.'

Yet most instances of time among the Shona refer to animals, e.g. *jongwe rechina* or the fourth cockcrow, i.e. 4.00 a.m. when it is time to rise; or *mashambanzou*, when the elephants wash, when it is getting light. In both American Indian and Shona timetables there are fine distinctions of time at the beginning of the day when the position of the sun can be related to terrestrial objects, the trees for the Indians and animals for the Shona. These examples also illustrate that time in traditional societies is not a collection of hours, minutes and seconds but a sequence of experiences. A field is not ploughed in four hours but between two positions of the sun.

What happens to the sun after sunset may depend on whether you are a Copernican, a Ptolemaean or a 'flat earther'. If, as was believed by most African tribes, the earth ended at the horizon or at a distant mountain range, then it was plausible to consider that the sun travelled over a stationary earth to reappear next morning after a journey under the earth. There were variations on this theme. The Venda of the northern Transvaal held that the sun travelled under the sea on which a disc-like earth floated,⁶ a concept known to the Greeks of the 6th century B.C. The Ronga were divided on this subject, some believing that the sun passed under the earth at night whilst others thought that a new sun arose out of the sea each morning,⁷ an explanation offered by a Shona informant which has probably diffused from the coastal Ronga of Mocambique. To the Ila of Zambia the sun leapt back over the earth, from west to east each dawn; a completely unwitnessed phenomena as it was believed that such a sight would result in the death of the onlooker." The Korekore of northeast Rhodesia knew the sun as a torch carried by Mwari or God, who each evening casts the dying torch into a large hole, lighting a new torch the following morning.⁹ The Shona generally believed that a new sun appeared each day

from the darkness of the east and was swallowed up in the darkness of the west, 'semunhu anozvarwa achizofa', 'like a man who is born and then dies'.¹⁰

The midday sun is immediately overhead at the tropic of Capricorn on 21st December, and at the tropic of Cancer on 21st June, the dates of the solstices. Between the tropics the sun appears to cross the equator on about 23rd September and again on 21st March, the dates of the equinoxes. To the Bambara of Mali these dates are of crucial importance as they signal the commencement of sowing, harvesting, landclearing and the smelting of iron from its ore. It was the custom of each Bambara village to construct a cylindrical granary according to a traditional design transmitted down the centuries. At about the time of the solstices and the equinoxes it was the duty of the village headman to measure with his feet the shadow cast by this granarygnomon at midday, e.g. a little before the 21st June he measured the shadow each day until it was three 'feet' long when it was then known that sowing should start."

The Rainbow

In African society there was none of Wordsworth's 'My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky'; it was never associated with pleasant and aesthetically satisfying sentiments. Instead, it was regarded as dangerous and malignant; dangerous because it would burn the trees on which it settled, and malignant because it was generally believed that it prevented rain from falling. The ha pointed to it with a grain pestle to drive it away, but the Baganda of Uganda would never risk this action for fear that the pointing finger would become stiff. There were those, such as the tribes of the lower Congo, who believed that a rainbow was a group of coloured snakes living in a termite mound; the Shona also look upon the rainbow as beginning and ending on termite mounds, although death will result if you happen to see where it ends. ¹² Again, among the Shona the rainbow is not only mutsvi wemvura, the rain pestle, but mutsvi waambuya or grandmother's pestle, a puzzling title because the rainbow is curved, unlike the pestle, but the analogy is symbolic rather than material. A pestle was not only used for stamping maize but as a defensive or protective weapon especially by old women. The rainbow protected them from rain which, though required by the arable farmer, was a nuisance to an old lady herding cattle who was insufficiently agile to run for shelter.

The Moon

More attention has been given to the moon possibly because of its regular phases and because of its association with the menstrual cycle. Among the Shona the new moon is mwedzi wazvarwa, the newly born moon, but it is usually mwedzi wagara, which is explained by the first line of a children's song, 'mwedzi wagara kuna dendere', 'the new moon is in a basket'. The full moon is jenaguru, the big whiteness, or mwedzi wakura, the moon has grown, and there are various other names for the different phases, all referring to its size and brightness. The regular appearances of the new moon heralded the beginning of each lunar month when the pregnant mother added a knot or a clay bead to her string to remind her when to call the muchingi or midwife. 'The moon brings children' say the Lele of Zaire,¹³ and the Sandawe of Tanzania not only believe it to be the source

of a woman's fertility but that it decides the sex of the child according to the state of the moon at conception." Explanation of the different phases is supplied by the Bushmen; the sun slices pieces from the moon leaving it at last with merely a backbone. The moon retires in order to recuperate but on returning to the night sky it feeds so voraciously that it develops a round stomach.⁵

Among the Shona the moon's phases are associated with health and sickness. Diseases, both physical and mental, are prevalent at new moon such as the lingering disease, *denda*, usually accompanied by a high fever; also epilepsy, cardiac disease and even madness which, however, disappear at full moon, especially if grass is added to the medicine horn and the contents sprinkled in the wind. Yet these diseases may reappear when the moon disappears or is 'dead'. The new moon is greeted with song by Shona children of which there are various versions, all commencing with *mwedzi wagara* e.g.

Mwedzi wagara kuna dendere, Dendere one mavara, Mavara anenge edzetse, Edzetse kutsetsenura.

The new moon is in a basket, A basket which is spotted, Spotted like a bullfrog, A bullfrog that grinds finely.

The last line no doubt refers to the grinding action of the bullfrog's mouth.

The eighth day of the new moon was a ritual holiday or *chisi* known as *rusere* when each village headman sounded a trumpet for three to five minutes between five and six o'clock in the evening. If possible a kudu horn was used, or, more modestly, an ox horn. On the following day a white beast was sacrificially killed so that the village would avoid the diseases associated with the new moon. The villagers' scorn for the diseases brought by the old moon was demonstrated by spitting 'ptu' in its direction when the new moon appeared.

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Shona legends stress the analogy between the 'death' of the moon and the custom of executing the chief when his physical strength was deteriorating. The more virile successor was shown to the tribe as a new moon succeeding the old." To the Swazi a full moon was the time to introduce a new king to his people, and his councillors were punished if they so mistimed the ceremony that it took place under a waning moon, implying a loss of strength." A full moon is generally associated with superabundant strength and health but special precautions must be taken in the period of darkness preceding the new moon when people are vulnerable to disease. In a vague manner this belief can be related to the medieval concept of planets controlling the vitality of various bodily organs the influence of the macrocosm on the microcosm.

The moon is not always female as it is among the Shona. In Malawi it is a man with two wives. One of them is the evening star, *chechichani*, who is a poor housekeeper, and during the fortnight he stays with her he is starved and pines away. The other is *puikani*,

the morning star, who brings him back to life with her excellent feeding until he is quite round.⁸ Chechichani and puikani are different positions of the planet Venus. A Hausa riddle from Nigeria stresses the masculinity of the moon e.g.

Q. The cows are lying down but the big bull is standing up. A. The stars and the moon.⁹

Yet from the same country there comes a fable similar to a Malayan story in which the sun and the moon are both women who agree to eat their children, the stars. The sun's children perished but the moon hid hers, and when the sun discovered her deceit she chased the moon in a neverending pursuit. Occasionally the sun overtakes the moon, biting a piece out of her, which explains the formation of lunar eclipses.²⁰

Moon worship appears not to be practised generally by Africans although mothers show their newborn children to the moon. Rather than a deity the moon may be regarded as a friend or as an enemy, just as the Ronga ascribe lunacy to the evil effects of moonlight.²¹ Exceptions are the Venda and the Tonga, or Toka, of the Zambezi valley who regard the moon and the sun as the gods of night and day.²² Among the Hottentots the moon is a friend, but the Bushman, hunting at night, is fearful of the effect of 'the moon's water', a sticky liquid found on bushes under moonlight which neutralises the arrow poison, allowing the wounded animal to recover and escape.²³

Several Shona legends about the moon could very well have come from space fiction. A woman was gathering firewood on a chisi, or ritual rest day, a serious offence in African society as this day is prescribed by the Chief to honour Mwari or a famous ancestor of the tribe. The moon descended and removed her to the sky where she remains because the Shona see in the moon a woman with a bundle of firewood.²⁴ Another version tells how Mwari grabbed her and placed her on the moon. The third story is about a series of space failures in which attempts were made by Rozvi subjects to capture the moon as a plate for their Chief, Changamire. They are said to have taken place during the 14th century but recent research suggests that the late 17th or 18th century is more correct. These attempts are believed to have taken place at Tikwiri mountain between Rusape and Inyazura; on Zhombwe hill near Mrewa; at Mupuyo mountain in Chiweshe; and at Firifidy near Mount Darwin. The object of each exercise was to lift the mountain by manpower to enable those at the summit to seize the moon. In each case trenches were excavated at the foot of the mountain or hill, an undertaking which cost many lives through falling rocks or collapsing trenches. It was the crescent moon that was sought by the Rozvi as it was lighter than the full moon and would, anyway, develop into a full moon on earth. These incidents have generated a legend that the Chiefs' insignia, a brass crescent, recalls these exploits of the Rozvi. There is the oral evidence of Chiefs Jiri, Gumunya and Chiduku that the crescent moon motif was suggested to officials of the Chartered Company who ordered the original batch of insignias, sending a pencil sketch of a crescent moon.²⁵

Eclipses

The traditional Shona would assent to Gloucester's statement in *Lear*, 'These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us', as eclipses of the sun were regarded as

occasions fraught with extreme danger, requiring the assistance of the ancestral spirits to release the sun from darkness. During a total eclipse of the sun in Uganda in May 1947 it is recorded that at one village the inhabitants beat their drums and prayed on their knees. Less disturbed was a colony of bats which emerged from the church and flew around until the sun reappeared when they returned to their quarters in the roof of the church.²⁶ And although Africans would not strive after a causal theory of the solar system or any regular phenomenon, it is when there is a deviation from the normal course of events, or the appearance of the unexpected, that an explanation is demanded and sought. Among the Shona an eclipse of the moon signals the death of a prominent person such as a Chief. It is usual to say 'mwedzi waora', the moon is rotten, when it is in eclipse, although the educated are heard saying 'mwedzi wadzikatidza', the moon is screened or overshadowed, which it certainly is. How the moon dispels its 'rotteness' and recovers its 'ripeness' is not understood but it is interesting to note that the Trobriand islanders of the Pacific refer to the first quarter of the new moon as 'the unripe moon'.²⁷

Among the Kaguru of east Africa a solar eclips occurs when 'the earth is caught' and is a period of great anxiety in which the ancestral spirits and God are asked to free the sun from darkness. No similar concern is shown for the eclipse of the moon, nor do the Kaguru refer to solar eclipses as reference points in time. The appearance of Halley's comet in 1910 is cited but it was not considered an important event or a portent of danger.²⁸

Two months after an Ndebele impi had left for the Zambezi valley there was a lunar eclipse which to those left behind was taken as a sign that not only had the raid been successful but that a Chief had been slain in battle, conclusions which were subsequently confirmed. A less fortunate raiding party in 1885, whilst crossing the Kalahari en route to lake Ngami, were worried by the nonappearance of the expected full moon. Anxiety turned to terror when the eclipsed moon at last showed its horns of light, and the impi, thinking itself bewitched, turned for home, a march in which many died of thirst in the desert."²⁹ Perhaps the most famous and wellknown solar eclipse in Africa occurred on 25th November, 1835 whilst the migrating Ngoni under Zwangendaba, or Zongendaba, were crossing a drift on the Zambezi river near Zumbo.

The Planets

Although the Shona do not distinguish by name between planets and fixed stars they are all nyenyedzi they are aware of some of the planets the most well known of which is Venus. It appears in the morning as hweva or hweva zuva, derived from kukweva 'to pull' as it was believed that it pulled up the sun at dawn, a form of astronomical tug. The Karanga looked upon Venus as the moon's wife so that the phrase mukadzi womwedzi was usually added to the name of the star.³⁰ Whilst hweva is certainly Venus there is some doubt as to whether it is also the evening star, vhenekerasvimborume, which 'gives light to the bachelor' to see his way clearly to his girl friend, which some believe to be Jupiter, known as the lover's star. Anticipating the sequel, vhenekerasvimborume is also known as mwenga, the bride.

Another early morning star in the east is nymatsatse which may be Mercury although it is sometimes confused with Venus. Its presence is welcomed by fishermen because it implies a profusion of eels or nyamasase, and one informant told me that his grandfather fished for eels in the rivers of the Macheke and Rusape districts as late as 1950. The stars were indeed read by the Shona, not for astrological purposes but to assist in food gathering by hunters and fishermen. They were aware of the rings around Saturn, chirema, the lame or abnormal star, and believed that they consisted of 'small stars held by an unknown attraction, awaiting a time when they would fall away to an independent life as do children when they leave the home', which is not too inaccurate a description when modern astronomers describe the rings as consisting of small icecoated particles, each with its own orbit.³ Murongazuva is said to be Mars.

The Fixed Stars

Compared with the inhabitants of Asia and Europe, the African peoples of the southern end of the continent appear to have shown a limited but specialised interest in the sky. They sought the intervention of their ancestor spirits when plagued by illness, drought or crop pests, and the future was foretold by mediums, zvikiro, who interpreted the wishes of the spirits. In Asia and Europe the future was divined by astrologers, usually priests, from the position and pattern of the stars. It would, indeed, have been difficult for a preliterate society to have practised astrology, a subject which demanded the exact recording of past events in order to forecast the future.

The Karanga of Rhodesia agreed with the Venda that stars are suspended from the sky and that a falling star has broken away. Another Karanga point of view is that they are doors into the sky, and yet another claims that they are the eyes of departed husbands who wish to see their wives and children,³² although this belief contradicts the general view that the family spirits, the midzimu, remain close to their earthly home. Yet informants

³⁵ have told me that the midzimu are capable of travelling but frequent the family home in times of crisis. Further, there are some Shona who associate the planet Mercury with a form of heaven. The notion of stars as torches or fires is common, for example, the Korekore believe them to be candles or torches carried by the midzimu, and that a shooting or falling star, nyenyedzi yadonha, is an arrow shot from the bow of a mudzimu against an evil wandering shave, to be distinguished from the shave which can confer a skill on the person it possesses.³³ There are various other interpretations of falling stars such as heralding a death; a sorcerer, muroyi, on his, or usually her, travels; your future wife is to be found where the star falls: or simply that you will be lucky.

The Bushman's Interest in the Stars

If the southern African tribes have shown relatively little interest in the stars this cannot be said of the Bushmen. On their hunting expeditions no shelters were constructed apart from a semipermanent camp when only the flimsiest of grass screens were made. They were thus more familiar with the appearance of the night sky and relied on the light of the

stars to find their way back to camp after a hunt. Just as the evening star, vhenekerasvimborume, lights the path of the Shona bachelor, so the bright stars Sirius and Canopus shine for the Bushmen. Believing that a star's brilliance was due to the sun's heat, it was the custom to point a burning brand from the fire to these stars as soon as they appeared, an example of imitative magic. One of their myths tells how a certain girl of their tribe, wanting more light from the sky, threw up the white ash from an old fire to form the Milky Way. She is also reputed to have torn up the red and white roots of a plant and to have thrown the pieces towards the sky where they formed the red and white stars. Like some Shona they believe that a falling star announces a death, but the Bushmen say that when the hammerkop, or kondo, sees the star, it flies to the bereaved relatives to break the news.

Star Groups

The constellations as known to Europeans were named some 4 000 years ago by the gifted Sumerians who lived in what is now southern Iraq. As they were inhabitants of the northern hemisphere some of our constellations were unknown to them but these were subsequently named by navigators and astronomers in the 17th and 18th centuries. The few star groups named by Africans do not necessarily coincide with the usual constellations with the exception of the very compact Pleiades, known to the Shona as chisimira or planting time, and chimutanhatu which refers to the six visible stars. It is not a complete constellation but an asterism and part of the constellation Taurus, the Bull. They were named by the Greeks after the daughters of Atlas and Pleione, but there are many more stars in this asterism. The Pleiades are known to most Africans and are mentioned in accounts of such widespread tribes as the Venda of the Transvaal, the Komo of Zaire, the Pondo of the Transkei, the Ila of Zambia, the Zulus and the Hottentots, to whom they signal the beginning of the agricultural year, unlike the nonagricultural Bushmen who do not recognise the Pleiades. Various forms of imagery result in different names bestowed on the group.

The Ila name means 'the hairs on a man's chest', whilst to the Komo it is a basket of pangas since the appearance of the Pleiades is the signal for tree-felling and the preparation of new lands.

In Greek mythology Orion was a famous hunter and his name is given to a constellation where he is represented with outstretched arms, wearing a belt and sword. Among African tribes parts of this constellation are named, as in the case of the Karanga to whom the three bright stars of the belt are ngurube, the pigs; yet the Southern Cross is known to them as vana ngurube, or 'those who have pigs'. The Korekore know these same three stars in the belt of Orion as mademba ndikuteme which may be rendered as 'regretfully, I cut you' and may refer to the throat cutting of a black bull as part of a rainmaking ritual sacrifice. Hottentots group together the six stars of the belt and sword into 'the three zebras' whilst the Venda see in them 'the rhinoceros'. As a hunter, Orion had a dog, the constellation Canis major, the brightest star of which is Sirius, the Dog star. Is it a coincidence or diffusion of ideas that have caused the Karanga to recognise this star as imbwa, the dog?

The Shona Sky

The star sketch maps which accompany this article are the work of a Manyika informant. To collate the Shona and English names would require the cooperation of members of both races with a knowledge of starlore, and therefore many of the Shona star names are given without their English equivalents. But the meanings and functions of some of the Shona stars make a delightful commentary on aspects of Shona life, as, for example, the previously mentioned vhenekerasvimborume. Ngavi, the bullock, is a star once used by tribesmen when searching for wandering stock at night. The appearance of monga, meaning 'termite mound bee', signals the presence of honey in termite mounds. Ndemara refers to teasing in a playful manner between boys and girls when the boy declares to the girl, 'urinyenyedzi yangu' or 'you are my star'.

The constellations in the star maps have been identified from a common point of reference, chimutanhatu, which, with its other name of chisimira, refers to the six visible stars of the Pleiades. Orion is, therefore, chinyamunomwe, the group of seven, and chimutatu is the group of three which may refer to Aries or Triangulum, but this is doubtful. Three interesting and tentative conclusions appear from these maps. Firstly, chinyamunomwe and cliimutanhatu are represented by simplified pictures or pictograms. Further, the Shona names given to them refer not to the hunter, Orion, or to the virgin Pleiades, but to the number of visible stars in each group. Lastly, unlike most African constellations, these correspond to those groups recognised by Europeans, and therefore it is suggested that Europeans introduced them to the Shona who then gave them vernacular names. Yet the names of individual stars, ngavi, hweva zuva, etc. appear to be the original Shona names.

African imagery has resulted in at least three names for the Milky Way. The innumerable stars are likened to the uncountable elephants of a passing herd, and so it is gwara renzou, the path of the elephant. It is also gwara ravavhimi, the hunter's path, because its position indicated the time of the

night. No explanation is available for gwara remwenye, the path of the Muslims, possibly a reference to the Lemba of Belingwe and Gutu who claim that their ancestors came from Egypt, and today practice circumcision, kosherkilling, and abstain from the eating of pork.

Stars and the Calendar

The uses of timepieces and calendars has eliminated the need for reading the sky which had been an important function of a preliterate society, a function necessitated by the difference between the lunar and the solar year and its consequences for ritual and agricultural activities. The tribesman's problem was also that of Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. when, through his astronomer Sosigenes, he introduced the leap year; and also that of Pope Gregory XIII who in 1582 decreed that century years should be divisible by 400 to qualify as leap years. Calendar problems have arisen for two reasons; firstly, twelve lunar months account for only 354 days; secondly, the time for a full revolution of the earth

about the sun, or the solar year, is not an exact number of days but 365,24 . . . It is the first problem that directly concerns the tribesman and he has sometimes solved it by carrying over the balance of 11 days for three years which accumulates to a period of just over one month. Therefore each three year period contains two years of 12 months and a third year of 13 moons. The Venda have adopted this method but not without some difficulty because arguments arose between the young men who, perhaps, consulted printed calendars, and the older men as to whether a certain year contained 12 or 13 moons. It was perennially resolved because the Venda year is a sidereal year, or one which refers to the position of fixed stars; in this case it is tuda, the giraffe, made up of the Southern Cross and its Pointers.³⁷ If after 12 lunations there is no sign of the Pointers above the horizon at sunset, then the next moon is aptly called khangwa vhanna or 'men forget', and the following moon becomes the first month of the new year.

It would be tempting to describe a similar astronomical procedure used by the Shona but apart from a Karanga reference to the Pleiades as a calendrical constellation, signalling land preparation,³⁹ there appear to be no astronomical signs among the Shona in general to indicate the beginning of a new year. Generally, the moons were counted after the advent of the first rains in gumiguru or October, which, after three moons, brought them to the second rains in ndira, January, which was taken as the beginning of the new year.⁴⁰ Applying this method to the year 1978 the three moons would appear on 31st October, 30th November and 29th December which would be the beginning of the year and the first day of ndira, corresponding usually to the onset of the second rains. A third explanation is that the new year was announced by the medium of the tribal spirit, the svikiro.⁴¹ The Shona, like the Venda, could not avoid the problem of adding a thirteenth month every three years but the procedure is not at all clear. It appears that there was an extra moon in April or May, and most certainly in winter as it was called bandwe which may be derived from mubandirwa or 'dry season ploughing', and kupanda nzungu or 'lifting groundnuts from dry land'.

An interesting example of stars indicating the season is found in Zaire where, to the north and east, live the Komo who experience four seasons during the year. When the Pleiades appear on the horizon in November it is the signal for the men to sharpen their pangas in readiness for bushcutting and land clearing. The Pleiades remind them of their pangas which are carried in a basket, such is the meaning of amadjankoso. Panga sharpening is soon followed by the appearance of mokuphe on the evening horizon which signals the commencement of land clearing for the cash crop, rice. Mokuphe is a group of five stars forming part of the constellation Lepus, the Hare, but the Komo see not a hare but a man with head, hands and feet. The second season, from April to June, is known by the appearance of abalubalu, Ursa major or the Great Bear, of which the familiar Plough is a part. A second, but smaller, plot is then cleared for a home garden in which is planted manioc, maize, bananas and pumpkins. The Komo cannot be left without briefly mentioning the other two seasons. During the dry June to August season the men hunt and the women fish. The fourth season, regarded as the most important, is a time when the women collect edible caterpillars from the forest tree muzhanje whilst the men harvest the crops. Thus, two of the seasonal signs are astronomical, one is meteorological and the other is cultural.⁴²

Cosmologies and Cosmogonies

A deep interest in the sky, and at least an extensive oral literature concerning it, appear to be indispensable prerequisites for the development of world systems. There is a notable difference between the awareness of possible cosmologies in north and central Africa as compared with southern Africa where interest is centred mainly on the existence of life today rather than on the creation of the world and mankind. Certainly the complex cosmology of the Dogon and Bambara of Mali is in direct contrast with the complete lack of it among, say, the Lovedu of the Transvaal who have no interest in speculating on origins and causes.⁴³ One can hypothesise that distance from the civilisation of Egypt can be correlated or associated with this remarkable difference, and that the diffusion of ideas lost momentum in its journey southwards. The observations of Aristotle, Herodotus and Diodorus on the blackskinned, woollyhaired inhabitants of Egypt have been enlisted to support the theory that a truly African science was born in that country, but the evidence is still controversial and speculative. However, the outstanding anthropologist, the late Marcel Griaule (1898-1956) whose life work was with the Dogon, said of them ' . . . these people live by a cosmogony, a metaphysics and a religion which put them on a par with the peoples of antiquity . . . ' truly, an immense intellectual compliment. The Dogon represent their cosmology by a model formed from a large basketwork structure placed upside down, the circular base of which symbolises the sun; the square roof is the sky, and the circle in the centre of the roof simulates the moon. Four stairways constructed on the sides of the basket face towards the cardinal points of the compass. These details are irrelevant for our purpose but what is interesting is the association of each stairway with life and the stars, e.g. the Pleiades, Orion's belt, Venus and a 'longtailed star' not identified.

Both the Dogon and the Bambara have had an obsession regarding the changes in the elevation of the noonday sun above the horizon which, when graphed, forms a slightly irregular zigzag line, a motif found on their shrines, calabashes, tools and weapons and introduced into some of their dances. The zigzag line is a projection on a plane surface of the apparent spiral motion of the sun as it passes daily from East to West, and also annually from North to South and back to North again in its route between the tropics. The zigzag line changes in size as the hours of daylight lengthen and as the noonday sun appears higher in the sky. The shape of the zigzag line also indicates the effect of what is known as the precession of the equinoxes i.e. the drift westwards of the equinoxes due to a continuously slight change in the direction of the earth's axis over a period of 26 000 years. This is caused by the toplike spinning motion of the Earth due to the gravitational pull of the moon on the Earth's equatorial bulge. These two tribes are thus aware of the diurnal and annual changes in the position of the sun, and although the astronomical reasons may not be appreciated they are aware of the effects of precession.

In addition, the Bambara also draw the journeys of mythical heroes, these excursions corresponding to the apparent paths of the sun, moon and planets which include Venus, Mars and Jupiter.⁴⁷ Yet more remarkable is the Dogon obsession with Sirius A, the brightest star. In 1844 the German astronomer Friedrich Bessel discovered that Sirius A, far from being a fixed star, had a slight orbit due to no other cause than the presence of a

nearby and hitherto unidentified star, which was observed in 1862 by an American Alvan Clark, and named Sirius B, orbiting Sirius A every fifty years. How the Dogon knew of the presence of Sirius B without optical aids is a mystery; they claim that Nommo, one of the four original ancestors of the tribe, told them, but keener perception may be the true explanation as in the case of the Shona who appear to have been aware of the rings of Saturn. The Dogon celebrate the completion of an orbit with a ceremony, Sigwe, every fifty years which allows time for some of the organisers to recollect the details of the previous ceremony.

Archaeoastronomy and Zimbabwe

Towards the end of the nineteenth century two investigators at Great Zimbabwe suggested that this and other ruins had functioned as solar and stellar observatories in determining summer and winter solstices for agricultural and ritual purposes. The Conical Tower was, perhaps, a gnomon serving the same purpose as the granary gnomons of the Dogon. Monoliths and rocks at the so-called Acropolis were believed to have been used to measure the transit of high magnitude stars. If these times were known, and the stars identified, then a comparison with present day readings of transit would enable us to date the ruins because the rate of precession is known. Such conclusions were rightly criticised as they were intended to support a preconceived theory that the ruins were of Semitic origin or inspiration; that their builders indulged in sunworship; and that the ruins were of great antiquity, e.g. 1100 B.C.⁴⁹ However, the findings of the newly developed science of arch archaeoastronomy, an interdisciplinary subject, might give an impetus to a reexamination of Rhodesian ruins as possible observatories. Stonehenge comes to mind but most of the investigations are associated with the Indians of north and central America. There are the towers of the Navajo Indians in Arizona, and those of the Mayas in Mexico; the giant stone wheels or circular solstice indicators of Kansas, Wyoming and southern and central Canada. The towers have apertures through which the sun shines only at the winter and summer solstices.⁵⁰ These devices are characteristic of many peasant societies who, without timepieces and calendars, were anxious to know their location and orientation in space and time. At least, it might be found that observation of the sky was practised as much as in Egypt when the heliacal, or dawn, rising of Sirius A heralded the forthcoming inundation of the Nile. But before such an exercise is started there must be archaeological assurance that possible observatories now occupy their original positions which have not been changed by rebuilding, and above all, an assurance that the Shona possessed a deep and comprehensive knowledge of astronomy. The result of my own minimal questioning suggests that the Shona knew more about the stars than is credited to them today. It does appear that a society's obsession with sky and calendar was a measure of the status of their civilisation.

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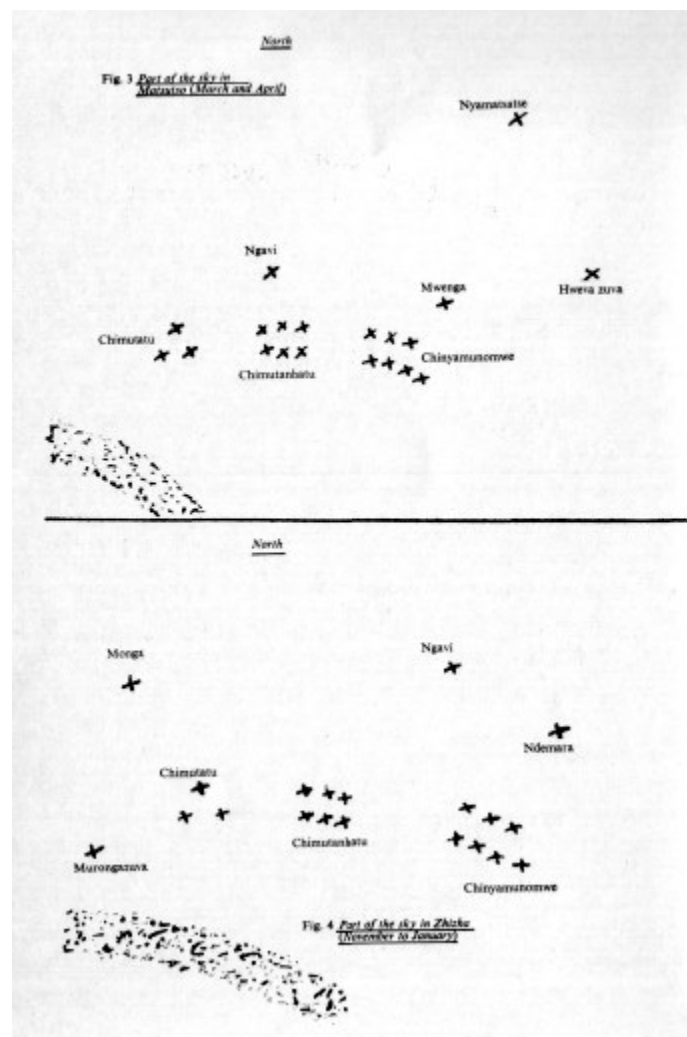
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Development for the future

by P. R. Hurlston

"Economic freedom is as important as political freedom. Not only must people have access to what other people produce, but their own products must in turn have some chance of reaching men all over the world. There will be no peace, there will be no real development, there will be no economic stability, unless we find methods by which we can begin to break down the unnecessary trade barriers hampering the flow of goods." So stated Wendell L. Wilkie when speaking on "Economic Freedom", and Sir George Stapledon has this to say: "The spirit of a country, if it is to be true to itself, needs continually to draw great breaths of inspiration from the simple realities of the country: from the smell of its soil, the pattern of its fields, the beauty of its scenery, and from the men and women who dwell and toil in the rural areas."

Can This Be Done

I. Transportation

(a) All 'Main Roads' used for transporting goods, whether it be ordinary merchandise or for the transportation of people, should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Roads and Road Traffic.

(b) All such roads through the A.P.A.s and T.T.L.s should have a minimum width of four metres, properly constructed, and surfaced with macadam. The verges would be maintained by existing Councils through whose administrative areas they pass (where through an A.P.A., by the Council for that particular A.P.A., etc.).

(c) Side roads leading off these main roads would be constructed and maintained by existing Councils.

2. Growth Points

Where there are existing Townships (Growth Points) these should be developed to include:

(a) Premises for both social and cultural activities adult educational facilities, schools, clinics and welfare centres.

(b) A central packing station where farmers' produce can be graded, packed and sent to market (similar to some of the fruit growing cooperatives in other countries).

(c) Bulk trading, buying and selling for farmers would be organised on a contractual basis.

(d) There should be a central Farmers' Trading Store, such as a Farmers' Coop., from which all agricultural supplies, e.g. fertilizers, feeding stuffs, seeds, farm implements, tools, etc. and also building supplies- timber, cement, window and door frames, etc., can be supplied to the farmer. (Note well: At present consider the amount of time and money wasted by tribesmen travelling long distances to our major towns and cities to purchase cement, door frames, etc.).

(e) Where there are irrigation schemes a horticultural propagating service would be provided where the plants, e.g. tomato and cabbage seedlings, etc., required by the farmers, are propagated and supplied to them. (Note: At some of our irrigation sites, such as Mabodza and Mutorahuku Irrigation Schemes in the Chiwundura T.T.L., the raising and selling of seedlings is being carried out by Y.F.C. members.).

(f) Pedigree herds should be maintained at 'District Centres' (A.I. Centres) for the supply of semen and breeding stock for farmers, and a boar service should also be made available to farmers.

(g) Selected farmers would take part in a poultry breeding scheme, sending eggs to hatcheries from whence day-old chicks could be supplied to farmers.

Farmers interested in the breeding of rabbits should be encouraged to set up commercial rabbitries and to form Commercial Rabbit Breeders' Associations within their own areas.

(I) Major cultivations of arable land and reaping of produce would be supplied and carried out by a service department where required, thus supplying implements and labour to carry out such cultivations for farmers at a reasonable cost.

(j) At each Township (Growth Point) there should be a resident Agricultural or Extension Officer with an experienced extension staff available for consultation by the farmers.

(k) Farmers should be encouraged to keep their own records of accounts, but most will require training in this. However, arrangements could be made for the keeping of all the farmers' farming accounts thus saving the farmer the anxiety and worry over financial matters and difficulties and so 'making it possible for the farmer the producer to devote his whole time to the production of first class crops.' Where there is a need for 'Secondary Industries' further Growth Points should be established where cottage industries can be undertaken.

3. Capital Requirements

The majority of African farmers both in the A.P.A.s and T.T.L.s are undercapitalised when they start farming. Farmers should be assisted in starting, no matter whether they be Africans, Coloureds or Europeans, at a reasonable rate of interest and on easy repayment terms for fifteen years up to three-quarters of the capital required. The equipment and other items purchased would correspond with the production plan for the farm which the Extension Staff work out with the farmer. If a farmer is prepared to work hard and to

keep his personal expenditure within reasonable limits, some of the return can be reinvested in further equipment and restocking where necessary.

Conclusions

In the years that lie ahead for this country much rebuilding, planning and developing of all areas will be taking place, for where there's a will there's a way, and a way must be found for improving the lot of all our peoples. What then would be the advantages of such 'Development'?

Good main roads throughout the A.P.A.s and T.T.L.s; loan of up to threequarters of capital required; bulk purchasing of requirements; centralised grading, packing and marketing of all produce grown on the farms, and control of farmers' accounts; breeding stock easily obtained by the farmers as well as plants for intensive vegetable production.

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Religion and Attitudes to the Livestock Extension Service

by R. J. Theisen

(An extract from a paper on "Motivation and extension in tribal communities" prepared for the Gutu District Team in January, 1978.)

Christianity as reflected by church attendance is a significant variable in the development of favourable attitudes towards extension services, and is possibly just as important as school education. This is suggested by Analyses I and 2. Analysis I, for example, shows that 63% of men and women are literate, and of these 80% have favourable attitudes; while Analysis 2 shows that 44% of men and women attend church services and of these 82% have favourable attitudes.

However, as there is also a significant positive correlation between church attendance and school education' we cannot, without further investigation, suggest that attitudes are being influenced by the church or Christianity, for it could well be that school education is the overriding factor.² Fortunately, the influence of school education can be controlled by comparing the attitudes of regular churchgoers with the attitudes of nonregulars, for there is no difference in the school education of people who regularly attend church

services and those who do not regularly attend.³ Such a comparison confirms the importance of church attendance and religious practice for it shows that 85% of regular churchgoers have favourable attitudes to the livestock extension service, while only 75% of nonregular churchgoers have favourable attitudes. (The relationship is significant at a probability level of less than ,03). This is also confirmed by other statistics which show that the regular churchgoers obtain significantly better crop yields, and have a better diet and a lower rate of child mortality by comparison to nonregulars. These findings clearly illustrate a connection between the incidence of church attendances and the socioeconomic development of tribespeople.

So far, the discussion has centred on church attendances, but statistics also show that religious affiliation in itself is an important factor in the development of attitudes. The greatest support, and also the greatest opposition to the livestock extension service, is likely to come from 'proscriptive churches',⁵ and this will depend on the extent to which the ethics and doctrine of such churches agrees with the agricultural policy and programmes of the extension service. Traditionalists on the other hand generally have undefined and sometimes negative attitudes.

Analysis 3, for example, shows that in Matshetshe the attitudes of the people who belong to the proscriptive Church of Christ are significantly more favourable than the attitudes of Traditionalists. The same situation is also true of the proscriptive Dutch Reformed Church in Gutu, and to a lesser extent the Salvation Army in Bare.⁶ However, other analyses show that in the Salvation Army the attitudes of men towards the livestock extension service are significantly less favourable than the attitudes of women, which suggests that there may be some opposition between this church and the livestock extension service. This is further confirmed by an analysis which illustrates a significant negative correlation between the church attendance of men in Bare and their attitudes to the extension service. This analysis also suggests that opposition may be building up in other churches as well as the Salvation Army.

It is, however, important to realise that there is generally more support from the church than there is opposition, and that Christianity in general appears to have a favourable influence on the socioeconomic development of rural communities.

All this evidence suggests that extension officials should consider religious institutions when implementing development projects. This does not mean that extension assistants should become active members of the church, or perhaps take part in traditional ceremonies. They should however, in accordance with the influence of local religious institutions, consult both Christian and traditional religious leaders for advice and support in the formation of development programmes and in the application of extension projects. In fact, if these religious leaders are not considered then extension officials could so easily, and unknowingly, find themselves at loggerheads with a local church, or local spirit medium, and this could greatly reduce their efficiency.

Such consideration of religious institutions by extension officials is particularly important in communities which are dominated by proscriptive churches,' for some of these

churches have their own agricultural policy which could so easily conflict with Government policy. This has happened in the past where, for example, extension officers have unsuccessfully tried to introduce Turkish tobacco in a prominently Seventh Day Adventist community, where smoking is frowned upon, and where the church has an influential agricultural policy which discourages the growing of certain crops such as tobacco; (Lower Gwelo community in the Midlands of Rhodesia).

In fact, many religious organisations have very effective 'social' extension services, and this in itself suggests that if Government extension projects were formulated to gain the approval and backing of these organisations, then there would be a high probability of effective application and lasting success; the two extension services would then work hand in hand, rather than in opposition or along divergent lines.

* The social extension services of progressive churches has been briefly mentioned in the introduction to this report. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the impact of these services on the development of favourable attitudes.

ANALYSIS 1. LITERACY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAVOURABLE ATTITUDES

Total Community	Attitudes (Study Month)	School Education			Per Cent Literate
		Illiterate	Literate	Total	
Base =	7 — Undefined and Negative	57	44	111	35%
Case =	8 — Positive	180	214	394	55%
Matshetshe	Totals	237	258	495	39%
	% With Negative Attitudes	35%	35%	35%	

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION
 $\chi^2 = 5.12$, which is significant at less than .05. Significantly more literate people have favourable attitudes to the extension service by comparison with illiterate people.

ANALYSIS 2. CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAVOURABLE ATTITUDES

Total Community	Attitudes (Study Month)	Church Attendance			% Church Goers
		Never Attends	Attends	Total	
Base =	7 — Undefined and Negative	71	44	115	35%
Case =	8 — Positive	131	263	394	55%
Matshetshe	Totals	202	307	509	45%
	% With Negative Attitudes	37%	18%	24%	

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION
 $\chi^2 = 15.36$, which is significant at less than .001. Significantly more of the people who attend church have favourable attitudes to the extension service, when compared with those who do not attend church.

ANALYSIS 3. A COMPARISON OF THE ATTITUDES OF TRADITIONALISTS AND PEOPLE WHO BELONG TO THE BRETHERN IN CHRIST

Attitudes	Religious Affiliation		
	Traditionalists	Brethren in Christ	Total
Livestock Extension			
7 — Undefined and Negative	35	13	48
8 — Positive	27	28	55
Totals	62	41	103
% With Positive Attitudes	44%	68%	53%

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION
 $\chi^2 = 5.12$. The difference in attitudes is significant at less than .05. Significantly more of the people who belong to the Church of Christ (68%) have favourable attitudes to the livestock extension service when compared with traditionalists (44%).

NOTES
 People who belong to Christian denominations other than the Brethren in Christ have been omitted from this Analysis. The Analysis only applies to the Matshetshe community.

NOTES

People who belong to Christian denominations other than the Brethren in Christ have been omitted from this Analysis. The Analysis only applies to the Matshetshe community.

1. The reason for this relationship is due to the fact that people who profess Christianity and who attend church regularly have generally been educated in a missionary school. They therefore have a significantly higher level of education than do the traditionalists, nonChristians and non churchgoers, many of whom have never been to school.

2. The importance of Christianity, and in particular the ethics and doctrine of proscriptive churches, such as the Salvation Army, Dutch Reformed, Church of Christ and Seventh Day Adventists, with regard to the development of favourable attitudes and the acceptance and practise of agricultural innovations has been briefly discussed in pages 6 to 7 of my short paper entitled "The Nutrition and Physical Development of Children in Three Tribal Communities of Rhodesia" dated 26.11.77.

3. Regular churchgoers are defined as those who attend one or more services a month, while nonregular churchgoers are defined as people who attend less than one service a month, but more than three services a year.

4. This relationship is significant in Bare at a probability level of less than ,10, and in Matshetshe at less than ,01. In Gutu where there is a high rate of church attendance by the majority of people the relationship is positive but not significant.

5. An explanation of what is meant by proscriptive churches is given on page 6 of my paper on 'The Nutrition and Physical Development of Children in Three Tribal Communities of Rhodesia'. The Dutch Reformed Church in Gutu, the Salvation Army in Bare and the Church of Christ in Matshetshe are all considered to be proscriptive churches.

6. These findings agree with the actual situation concerning the socioeconomic development of proscriptive church families, for statistics show that these families obtain better crop yields, have better diets and healthier children when compared with traditionalist families.

7. One of the more important doctrines of the proscriptive churches is the prohibition of beer drinking. This may be an important factor in agro-economic development, for statistics show that the incidence of beer drinking in family heads (men and women) is related to the development of undefined and sometimes negative attitudes towards the livestock extension service. Beer drinking is also associated with low crop yield, poor diet and underdeveloped children.

The Two Valleys

by A. J. Kirkland

"Do you think the world is round? Well, many people say so but here in the valley we know differently; it is because the world is flat that the sun rises in the east, follows the Zambezi river until it sinks in the west at its source and having burnt itself out is borne down the river by the current during the night to rise again in the east in the morning, day after day and night after night". This forms one of the basic beliefs of an isolated community until recently unaffected or uninterested in western thinking. A community ruled by spirits, the Mondhoros, whose wishes are interpreted by their mediums on earth, the Tswikiros; a community kept in the past since the orders come from the ancestors or predecessors whose stories and desires have not changed over the years. The people? The

maKorekore and the maChikunda living between the Zambezi and the Mvuradona Mountains in the Kanyemba area. But living in a world ruled by the spirits of the deceased does not imply a primaeval existence for memory and legends only seem to go back for perhaps one hundred or so years. Unaffected by outside influences? The Portuguese have certainly affected the maChikunda who are very much a mixture of Portuguese blood and ideas and the maKorekore whose spirits we shall visit, since these spirits date largely from territorial disputes between the Portuguese and Rhodesian Administrations; perhaps "memory" is the operative word, the present spirits and their disputes dating from within living recall; possibly before this there were other spirits and other disputes now forgotten by a people with no written records.

The maKorekore are vague as to their origins but stories of migrations and language affiliations would indicate that they once lived where Tanzania is today. Some claim that their ancestors caused the Zambezi waters to part to allow them to cross to the south but it is more likely that they crossed in years of great drought. The maChikunda are a mixture of these original inhabitants and the Arab slavers and Portuguese traders who followed. Although regarded as primitive it can be seen that these people have probably been affected by European and Arab influences for a longer period than any other section of the African inhabitants of Rhodesia. The Arab influence is very clear in the faces of many of the lighter complexioned maChikunda and the Portuguese influence in the number of Portuguese words used in this part of the Valley, also the spirits and their backgrounds.

Few Rhodesian whites have influenced this way of life; in fact few have passed this way; a mere handful comprising a few Government officials and an occasional recluse, living out his life in this remote area. Such people of course came from the "Other Valley", the second and identical valley to the south of the Mvuradona where the white people live in their own world; some leave their valley for a number of years to work in this "other valley" and return with stories which certainly rival those of the spirits.

Discounting stories of Biblical "parting of the waters" the area has little known or recorded history before the final quarter of the last century; the people, the spirits, the disputes and the arrival of the Rhodesian administration all seem to date from this time. Certainly, the Portuguese had been around this area for a long but largely undocumented time; the empire of Monamatapa must have encompassed the area and at one stage the Portuguese claimed to own or administer all the area east of Gwelo. The story as it affects us begins at the time of the demarcation of the MozambiqueRhodesia border in 19067, having been conceived around 1840 with the birth of Chief Kanyemba. This border was finally agreed upon after some years of wrangling between the British and Portuguese Governments and only after arbitration. Both parties having agreed to this (the present) border it was decided to survey it and mark it with beacons and with this event the story begins. But there is no need to believe me; let the spirits tell it themselves, it was their life, they lived it and are living it still:

"Chief Kanyemba lived and ruled in these parts, he was recognised by the Portuguese authorities and in fact was a "Sergeant" with a private army armed by the Portuguese

Government as a reward for his loyalty during a rebellion in the 1870's; he ruled an area on either side of the present border and spent his later years at a number of villages along the Zambezi riverbank, the main one being in the vicinity of the kraal of Chief Chapoto, near Kanyemba itself. At the time of the demarcation the Chief must have been around 70 years of age and was at a residence on the by now Portuguese side of the border when Rhodesian Administration officials came to visit him; a son was sent to tell the Chief of the visit and the desire of the Rhodesian officials to interview him and ascertain his boundaries and power; Kanyemba was told however, possibly by this son or possibly by the Portuguese, that if he went to live in Rhodesia he would have to pay tax and that the rifle the Portuguese had given to him would be taken away. Although given an ultimatum the Chief refused to leave Portuguese East Africa and as a result the son, a presumed grandfather of today's Chief Chapoto, was appointed Chief of the area. The spirits who normally made such decisions did not approve of this action and neither did the Chief who had three or possibly four other sons, each of whom was more favoured; the names of three have been passed on as Nyahumbe, Nyahondo and Kasuru. As the old Chief and each of these sons died they became Mondhoros and chose Tswikiros on earth through whom they spoke, made their wishes known and carried on what was by now a dynastic feud involving all in this section of the "Valley". Having made the decision, and the border, the officials returned to "their valley", leaving only the pyramidal beacons marking the border; this event can be pinned down as all the beacons are inscribed either 1906 or 1907.

The affair just described was consolidated by the next intruders from the "Other Valley", policemen, who arrived shortly afterwards and organised the building of a police station by Portuguese masons then working at Vila do Zumbo. It was so well built in fact that it resembled a blockhouse, offices and quarters all in one block on a raised platform, a verandah on all sides held up by giant stonebuilt pillars, their large size due to the shortage of beams or girders in such a remote place. This Kanyemba Police Station was beautifully situated on a kopje overlooking the bend in the Zambezi just before its confluence with the Luangwa at Vila do Zumbo; what an idyllic existence these early visitors had in such a place is the thought of today's visitor to this spot and so it was if we read a description written by a former resident policeman, "From the verandah I could look out over the vividly blue river, roughly 800 metres wide I should say, to Northern Rhodesia. Almost opposite the Luangwa flowed in, and to its east was Portuguese East Africa. The beauty of the country and the tropical growth in these parts round the rivers, peopled by generous and unspoiled tribesmen, was right out of this world".

This police post only remained occupied until the outbreak of the First World War when the personnel were withdrawn, and it was closed completely in 1917; thereafter it was only used in the dry seasons as a patrol base when it was occupied by a trooper from Sipolilo. A similar system must have been run by the then Native Department, one of whose servants, known there as "Murefu" the "tall one", leaving as his mark the hill a few kilometres upstream from the police post on which he built a camp of well constructed huts with a beautiful view, which is still known as "Gomo ra Murefu" being at the top of quite a climb. Since the people on the riverbank live in mosquit ridden misery at night it was presumably to avoid this that these early intruders from the "Other Valley" chose

these sites (or sights). This "Murefu" must have spent long years at his camp, the foundations of which are still visible, as he is still spoken of as the man who had the boundless energy to climb his kopje several times per day, so very different to the lethargic way of life of the permanent residents. "Murefu" was apparently a Mr. Bowker, the equivalent of the District Officer of today. What a wonderful existence when we compare it with the troubled conditions under which the Government staff of today operate in this and adjacent areas.

Towards the end of this period a third white resident crossed from the "Other Valley"; he was to stay there until death it is believed, but although not a civil servant was a more permanent resident. This was Mr. Fraser, who was apparently the wellknown Rhodesian character of those days, a "remittance man". From all accounts he was the son of an aristocrat in Scotland who was paid to stay away and since he did not need to work his "remittance" must have been considerable to allow him to live in such a way for most of his adult life until the late 1950's; his name is as well known as those of the farmers in the Sipolilo and Raffingora areas, that "Other Valley", for whom some of the valley residents have worked in the years that they have left their own valley. We may I think use Mr. Fraser's name, as the crossing of the Hunyani on the old track to Kanyemba near to which he had his house is still known as "Fraser's Crossing".

As can be imagined these few intruders could hardly have affected the inhabitants and even today's visitor can notice a slightly unworldly atmosphere there; grown adults at villages walking naked, aged crones smoking cigarettes through their noses and many hoarding outdated banknotes. The maChikunda, with their light coloured and obviously Arab influenced features, the high cheekbones and the triple scars on the cheeks, many having names of Portuguese origin, CanhembaKanyemba, Arlzhboa da Lisbon, VinyuVinho, AdimasauAdeu masao, and there are a number of Portuguese words in the local dialect as well, the main being CashasoKachasu, the local spirit distilled from the berries of the Masao tree, a giant variety of a Ziziphus subspecies. Perhaps the tree is a large variety, perhaps it simply grows larger as does nearly everything in this valley; in early summer the cathedral Mopanes, larger than those seen normally, turn whole sections of the area into a veritable jungle, their pale green early foliage having an almost painted appearance; game haunts the clearings in this Mopane forest, buck almost as graceful and pastel coloured as the leaves of the trees. Soon, with the rains, the grass is two metres high, no domestic stock to eat it here due to the Tsetse fly carrying the deadly Trypanosomiasis; at some villages human sufferers from this disease can be seen, almost lifeless, propped up against tree trunks; there is no point in the Africans here having their usual prejudice against trees for there are no great kraal or village clearings; these small scattered villages are cut out of the forest since they have to be sited near the larger rivers and when abandoned, the luxuriant growth soon covers everything. If it cannot move it grows and if it moves it bites; giant insects crawl and fly everywhere in vivid colours, only the birds are missing to complete this exotic scene; these great Mopane areas being seemingly devoid of birdlife save hornbills. Decay; Fraser's house now no more than a pile of rubbish near the old road; Murefu's camp now no more than foundation ridges; the old Kanyemba Police Station to which columns of porters trudged in years past now just a ruin, walls collapsing, pillars broken and large trees growing inside the former rooms.

Were these trees cut down during construction and since regrown or have they seeded themselves since the abandonment of the building? An indication of the fantastic growth rate in the area is a young baobab in the yard of the former Police Station with the date "1941" cut into the bark which is now over three metres up the trunk and well out of reach. Little has changed and nothing lasts, nothing manmade that is; the hundreds of kilometres of cutlines across the floor of the valley marking out ricegrowing areas envisaged by the Federal Government are little more than faint tracks used by the Tsetse Control vehicles; the great Zambezi flows on, unaware of the political changes that have recently affected the area.

The spirits have not changed either and the Mondhoros of Kanyemba and his three sons are still airing their views on that long ago Commission and the resulting succession problem. This was further complicated during the 1930's (it is thought), when a second Commission visited the area to delineate Chiefs' boundaries; they found Kanyemba's successor dying (Chapoto I I ?), and when they suggested, as they were to in other parts of Mashonaland, that the amaNdebele custom of succession by the eldest son be followed, the Chief quickly agreed and made his eldest son chief; this perhaps bears out the opinion of the spirits who felt that the whole succession affair was the fault of Kanyemba's son and that he had advised the Chief not to return to Rhodesia and also raised the taxation fear in order to become Chief himself. Although the adapted system of succession was quite alien to the area and the spirits (who had their own system of choice as will be seen), it has been taken up; the second Chief Chapoto handing over to his eldest son (the present 1970's) and this Chief intending to do the same.

It can thus be seen how a little local cunning, outside influence and former administrative misunderstanding have combined to cause the present succession dispute and spiritual rift amongst the people, but how would the spirits have handled things especially the choosing of a successor to a Chief or the Tswikiro who acts for his departed spirit? Regarding spirits one continually hears vague stories from Africans about voices from trees and lionfaced Mondhoropossessed men encountered on lonely paths and one hears of mediums going into trances to speak to such Mondhoros but what actually happens? Given the inherent belief in spirits by the Africans and their fear of the unknown and apparent ability to be intimidated a certain amount will never be understood by those who dwell in the "Other Valley". The current spirits, as that is what they can be called if, as seems to be the case, they are periodically replaced by new ones resulting from some new cataclysmic event, are therefore the three elder sons of Chief Kanyemba and the Chief himself, plus others associated with that time at the turn of the century; it is, of course, just within living memory.

The Chief himself died in Mozambique and the sons in Rhodesia; of the sons two were "laid to rest" near Kanyemba itself and the third in the area between the Hunyani and Dande rivers; the euphemism "laid to rest" must be used as it can be seen that they were not actually interred. In the area where sons I and II died the bodies were kept on platforms approximately two metres from the ground and constructed in thick bush of a special type; such platforms can still be seen and often carry a skeleton indicating that the remains are left there for some time, and not as the local people will tell the casual

questioner, merely at the burial service. At certain times in the evening and occasionally at night designated persons would walk alone through the bush and pass such a bier, eventually and possibly as much as a year later, one of these people would see a figure moving near the trees supporting the platform; this person would then realise that he had been chosen as the Tswikiro or medium and he would report this fact to the Tswikoro's "Committee" who had originally instructed the "candidates"; it does of course seem likely that the Mondhoros or their Tswikiros had already decided and included the new Tswikiro amongst the others selected.

The third son was "buried" but not deep in the ground, his body being laid in a grave with a depth of only a few centimetres, it then being covered with large rocks and boulders. Again, certain, and generally elderly men were selected and at certain times in the late evening walked past or near this grave; finally one of these people would see a lion (in the case of the Chief's son) or in some more recent deaths a hyaena has alternated, pawing at the rocks; again, this man would then know that he had been chosen by the Mondhoros and would report the fact to the Tswikiros. These people obviously had great local knowledge enabling them to know of facts and events that would not be expected of them (as with the spokesman for the Mlimo in the Matopos); they therefore sometimes chose a hyaena instead of a lion knowing from their own sources that few lion were then in the area. They also presumably arranged for the "right" person to pass the grave at the appointed time, well knowing the result. No two persons could ever reach a grave at the same time as in such a small and tightly knit community people who went walking in dangerous country at the dangerous time of sundown would be known and would in any case not be doing so out of choice. Occasionally, the person desired as a Tswikiro would not be available having gone to work in the "Other Valley". This "chosen one" would still receive his "message" and such was the case of the farm labourer at Darwendale, who, whilst on the farm was possessed by the spirit of a former personage from the DandeHunyani confluence. In such a case the Mondhoro spirits often allow the "charade" to continue for months or, in the case of the deceased Chief Chitsungo, for years, until the successor or Tswikiro has arrived. Possibly it is often difficult to locate the person desired as a Tswikiro when he has left to work in the "Other Valley" and so things must continue until his arrival; possibly some delays are simply due to the elders and "regular" Tswikiros being unable to reach a consensus. All this discussion, planning and decision takes place at the residence of one of the Tswikiros to which the elder village members and anyone of importance has been invited. What goes on at such a session and how does it happen.

It is approximately one hour before first light and the small village in the Mwanzamtanda valley is completely still; all the residents are in the ten to fifteen huts which comprise the settlement and from which the inhabitants of such spiritruded country would not venture during darkness. The village yesterday evening had presented a pleasant spectacle, the men returned from what little agriculture is practised hereabouts, the women going about their tasks and preparing food and the elders all gathered under a large Masao tree from which even then fruit was falling; fruit which will be made into (the distillate) Kachasu. These fruits can be chewed and it is customary to do so whilst talking, they leave the taste of a sundried plum in the mouth which is mildly thirst quenching. The sun is setting

behind the nearby hills in a blue haze, the air is warm and still and filled with the scents given off by the surrounding trees; fowls are placed in coops; the women disappear and the elders talk; all look old, it is a harsh existence, but one is older than most; he looks about 90, thin, bent and wizened and he wears spectacles in wire frames the lenses of which have become so scratched as to be completely opaque, almost white, resembling the base of a milkbottle. His sight is poor and a young girl assists him from place to place; he looks frail, too frail to have survived so long in the Valley but he is obviously a respected person and is treated in the best manner possible by all present. He is not the kraalhead, the questioner is told, he sits nearby, but this is Adimasau, the Tswikiro of the Mondhoro of Chief Kanyemba and it is a great privilege to have him residing here. Where does he live? Over there, that large hut surrounded by a woven reed wall which encloses a vegetable garden full of sweet potatoes. How does the old man cultivate? He does not, the community maintains his garden as an indication of how they value his presence. Would he leave? Oh yes, for years he wandered the floor of the Valley and might do so again. The visitors sit and talk, the Tswikiro absentmindedly chewing a Masao berry.

Even now the small talk is mainly of things and people past but this is concluded as the sun sets and the visitors are shown to an empty hut after which all retire.

Nobody will move tonight; bad spirits abound and besides, even now elephant can be heard trumpeting and screaming as they break down trees on their way to dig water in the riverbeds. A member of the party mentions that the Tswikiro was expected to be possessed by the spirit within the next day, a fact which explained the talk of things past that evening; such an event happens about once a month, they say.

Soon the village sleeps and only the animals move in the Valley; the animals, and possibly the Mondhoros for at the time the story begins the peace is rent by a series of cries, howls and gasps; all awake and the elders move in the direction of the medium's hut for they know that he has been possessed.

Having entered they cease talking and only one voice can be heard, a monotone, rising and falling and eventually becoming quiet. Five minutes have passed when the kraalhead greets the by now wideawake visitors. The spirit is present and all must attend; the visitors protest; they are outsiders, both working for the Government and one a European; no, both must come; it will cause offence to refuse and besides, the spirit is well aware of the visitors and wishes them to be present. The chance of a lifetime? Indeed it was; the visitors enter the hut and join the others seated against the wall in a semicircle around the spirit medium; the Tswikiro himself is at the back of the hut furthest from the door; he reclines in the manner of an African woman with both knees bent and together, weight resting on his left thigh and he leans against an old section of tree trunk, resembling the driftwood shapes in some lounges. He is wrapped in a bolt of black cloth worn toga style with beads, whilst on his head he wears a hat of halftwisted porcupine quills, all lying together looking like feathers on an Edwardian lady's hat and giving the medium the appearance of wearing a ghostly white halo.

The Tswikiro was recognisable but gone was the benign, frail person of the previous evening; spectacles removed, face ashen but animated, eyes clouded and unseeing, Adimasau was rocking gently backwards and forwards and speaking loudly but not to any particular person, his voice and accent changing continually as if imitating a conversation between several people. This, a linguist states, is in fact the case; the spirit of Chief Kanyemba is reliving a discussion with others on the fate of his sons. The villagers know this story, they have heard it many times before both as a discussion in the village and as a diatribe by the medium; partisan, they support one of the sons of the former Chief; they nod or occasionally express agreement or encouragement. This informative conversation continues for over half an hour until the medium, with some headshaking and quillrattling indicates that all present should take part. It is evidently a form of question time and the elders begin to ask questions, at first touching on the previous conversation, then about succession and old disputes and finally request opinions on presentday conduct and problems.

After nearly an hour has passed the medium begins to tire visibly, he bus and speaks slowly and more clearly. The visitors are asked to put questions; it would be rude not to do so and realizing the trend of the conversation they ask about Chief Kanyemba's life in Portuguese East Africa; the Tswikiro replies and when quoting the Chief speaks in Portuguese (he has of course spent his whole life in the border area). Further questions on tribal origins elicit stories of migration and rivers and how Chief Kanyemba had been loyal to the Portuguese and been given land and a firearm in return; he speaks of fleeing from the "Mziti". The Chief also dwells on the succession problem; even the spirits it seemed, still failed to agree on who should have succeeded Chief Kanyemba and all present put up arguments for one or other of his longdead sons; there seemed little chance of settling today's problems when those of 1906 were still unresolved.

This, clearly, was not the time to ask for opinions on terrorism or other subjects of the 1970's. At the time of the visit the Americans had just landed on the moon and the visitors had heard this at a small store with a radio, for these people were not worried by the problems of today, an instance of this being that early terrorists were reported by the local inhabitants as Zambians when they attempted to cash Rhodesian tendollar notes at one of the few stores; the Valley residents had never seen a tendollar note before and presumed it to be Zambian. They also preferred to deal in Federation banknotes, hoarding large numbers of these for better days. The Tswikiro was by now exhausted and merely reclined against his log and ceased to speak. A bowl was passed around into which people placed coins and with the medium apparently asleep or unconscious, all left the gathering and walked into the daylight outside. One spirit had spoken, the most important of them, and yet nothing was decided and the pattern of indecision continued.

In the case of the Chief Chitsungu the spirits were undecided, or seemed to be. The former Chief having died the D.C. Sipolilo appointed an acting Chief and the spirits were silent on this; what they would have done in the days before Administration is not known. After a year had passed still no decision had been made and all concerned seemed quite contented with this situation except the D.C. Sipolilo, who after a year and a half appointed a Chief himself, one who was known to be under consideration by the spirits

but unconnected with the former Chief or the acting Chief. The spirits expressed their dissatisfaction with this and eventually, after two years had elapsed, the Tswikiros indicated that the spirits favoured the acting Chief; a genuine case of indecision on their part it would seem.

Not all the spirits are those of departed persons of importance and Chiefs, however. Others take the form of bringers of good fortune such as the spirit that dwelt in a baobab tree near the kraal of Chief Chapoto. A Mondhoro was known to dwell in this tree and on certain evenings the Tswikiro and certain elders would gather around the tree and a trance state would result. After this, pots of food were left at the base and the following day children would be induced to play near this tree and those who found such food and ate it were considered to be possessed by this good spirit. These children would take the pots back to their parents who would know what had happened and who then took the pots to the base of the tree and broke them there; the ground around the foot of this tree was covered with broken pieces.

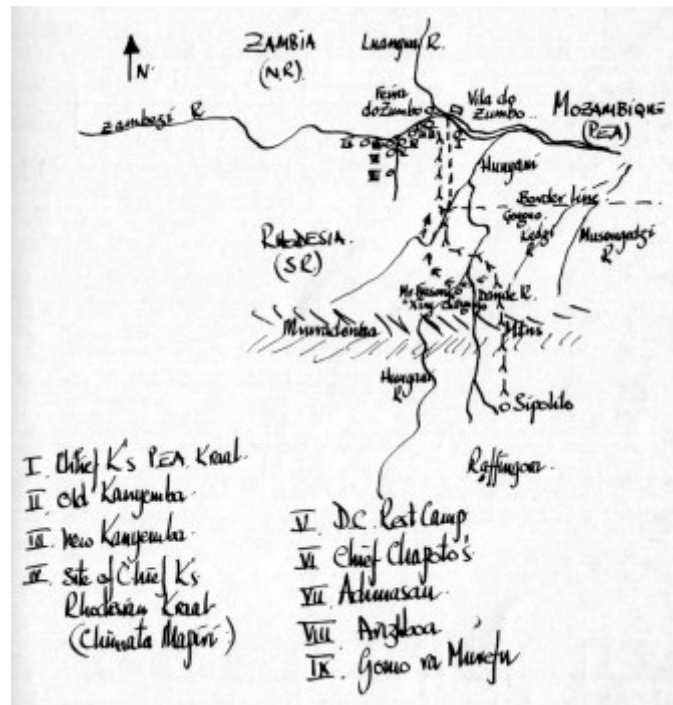
Yet another spirit was the Baboon spirit, a fairly common type of spirit all over the Valley. Why baboons should have such significance is not certain since they destroy what few crops are grown there and when killed they are eaten, unlike the practice in other areas. This spirit's choice consisted of a festival of drinking and dancing, one of which took place near Gonono and lasted for three days. On the third day of the drinking, dancing and monotonous drumming the candidates for the Tswikiro of the Baboon spirit dressed in baboon skins with tails and drank themselves into a stupor; after a number had gone into a trance at some stage a space was cleared and these "candidates", usually numbering about ten, congregated and began alternate shuffling and whirling until, whilst shuffling after a trance induced by the whirling, one would bark like a baboon and the spirit would have made its choice. The whole proceedings took place in almost complete darkness with only small cooking fires permitted on the periphery; a carnival atmosphere prevailed and the "baboons" circulated amongst the crowd, imitating the characteristics of the animal.

A further variation was the rain spirit, Maisheni, rather along the lines of the Rain Queens in South Africa, although lack of rain is rarely a problem in the Valley.

This account cannot be concluded without a reference to the now much publicised Wadoma, a minor tribe near the Zambezi some of whose members displayed the twotoed condition which has caught the imagination of so many. This group of people numbered around fifty in Rhodesia although there were reputedly many more in Portuguese East Africa, mixed with the muSena people. Few displayed the twotoed peculiarity, approximately one male in each family; contrary to the articles about them they could not run fast or climb trees with amazing agility, in fact they could not walk with ease and were almost unable to stand still which they only did with a swaying motion, the two toes present not being the first and second but rather the large and small toes only, with a "V" shaped gap in between, making the foot resemble a claw; small wonder that they had difficulty in balancing; climbing trees would have been out of the question. The Wadoma

had once been a separate tribe but linguistically have become completely absorbed by the maChikunda.

A glimpse into another world? Real enough to the residents and the civil servants who were posted there; a world now shattered by the advent of the Terrorist war. What do the spirits think of the new situation? Some, in the Mount Darwin area, were used to further subversion but as can be seen a society so occupied with the disputes of 75 years earlier is not likely to show much interest in the present and least of all in the future. Most of the people mentioned are now living in Protected Villages in the Sipolilo area in the "Other Valley" from which they were once so remote; outside inspired subversion having ended their way of life and forced them up on to the Mvuradona, only able to look down onto the great valley watching



the cloud shadows moving over their former homes. But, who can say, possibly even in a Protected Village the dispute continues and the Spirits argue over the rightful successor to Chief Kanyembe.

*British South Africa Police
December 1977*

The Kugarira Custom

by H. Gripps

The word kugarira is derived from kugara to sit, to live at or, to wait for. This is one of the marriage customs practised by the indigenous Africans.

Mugariri is a man who waits for or lives at the home of his chosen mate. He may begin his vigil while his chosen one is quite a small girl or he may begin when she is grown up and they commence to live as man and wife.

The suitor approaches his future fatherinlaw, Tezwara, through a relative or friend Samakuru, or, Munyai who makes the suitor's intentions known by asking Tezwara for a plate. When the plate is produced he puts 2s. 6d. in it and says "We wish to ask permission to speak about a matter between our family and yours." If permission is granted the Munyai then tells Tezwara, or a close relative of his, what he has come to speak about. He then pays Mabvunzo the asking or engagement fee of from 12s. 6d. to 30s. After the fee is paid negotiations may then be commenced and Mukwambo, the soninlaw, may speak with his Tezwara. Before acceptance of Mabvunzo he is not allowed to see or speak to his Tezwara. After the fee is paid the girl is known as his wife.

If the Mukwambo is a poor man and cannot pay chuma, lobola, the parties may agree that he will live at his wife's kraal and work for her parents until a daughter of his is married, when the chuma received for her will be handed over to Tezwara for her mother's chuma. Mukwambo is then free to leave and set up a home for himself.

The Ugariry, service marriage, as described may be of long duration unless the firstborn is a girl and her early marriage is arranged and chuma is paid in advance or Tezwara is of a trusting and broadminded nature such I fear are few and difficult to come by in actual life. The custom is gradually disappearing with the advance of enlightenment and earning capacity of the African. The spiritual side however, is more tenacious and refuses to give way as will be seen from the following case.

Robson met and fell in love with Nhambu the daughter of Stephen who lived in a tribal trust land in about 1950. A marriage was arranged in the normal manner of the kugarira custom with a difference the difference being this. When Stephen died he decreed that Nhambu should never leave his kraal to get married. If she married, her husband would

have to be a mugariri for ever. This decree was passed on to his mudzimu, spirit, which has insisted on the letter of the law as decreed by Stephen. Robson and Nhamba lived at her Father's kraal for some years and had several children. Life went along happily until Robson got tired of serving the family and went away to work on a nearby farm. He raised enough money to pay his chuma for Nhambu and after a lot of negotiating persuaded Nhambu's guardian to accept £40 and took his family to live with him at place of work. The guardian took the precaution to consult a witchdoctor, nganga or chiremba, In Portuguese East Africa where all the best witchdoctors are believed to operate. The nganga went to work on the £40 and informed his visitor that the spirit of Stephen agreed to waive the spell.

Robson and Nhambu by this time had five children and were living happily until one day Tirarami, the firstborn fell ill. His condition grew critical and a nganga was consulted. His verdict was that the grandfather's spirit was displeased. Tirarami died Nhamburo then fell ill with the same symptoms as her brother Tirarami the nganga gave the same answer Grandfather's spirit was very disturbed. Nhamburo died in due course. Nhambu became restive and consulted with her guardian and family 'What should be done?' Her father's spirit was obviously displeased. Masodzi then fell ill with biripiri measles. The nganga, a different one this time, gave the same verdict as in the cases of Tirarami and Nhamburo Masodzi died.

Nhambu decided to return to her home but Robson was very adverse and would not let her go. There were endless quarrels and bickerings and while these family troubles were going on over a long period the fourth child, a baby named Tomba, became ill. The nganga again diagnosed that the trouble was coming from the grandfather's kraal. The illness of Tombi was a long one. She eventually died and again the nganga pronounced that grandfather's Mudzimu was the cause of the death.

Grandfather's Mudzimu was now really wrathful and was determined to be obeyed. It was now Nhambu's turn to be struck down she became ill and lost weight rapidly she pleaded with her husband, Robson, to let her and the only remaining child, Mupfirwa, return to her home and allow her guardian to refund his £40. He obstinately refused and then Mupfirwa started to all and to lose weight. The position was now desperate. Robson suggested a visit to a famous nganga over the border. The result was similar to the previous ones and they were advised to take the case to the chief's Dare court. The chief advised Robson to return his wife and surviving child to the old home and to receive his £40 of cursed money back. This he very reluctantly agreed to do but added, "The curse must first be exorcised from the money before I will accept it." The curse was removed by a nganga and Robson received the £40. Mupfirwa and Nhambu are now back at home both restored to health, from all appearances. A divorce is now pending in the Native Commissioner's court.

The chapter of tragedies enumerated above just goes to show how implicitly the African believes in the power of the spirits, and shrinks from breaking with tradition especially when dictated by the family spirits.

The psychological effect of the four deaths no doubt caused Nhambu to lose weight. Who would not after losing so many children and then seeing the last remaining one beginning to fade away too? It would take a very strong character indeed to stand up to such tragedies without becoming ill with fear and suspense.

Notes

Mugarira - Son-in-law

Mukwambo - Son-in-law

NOTES

Ugarira - Service marriage

Kugarira -

Tezwara - To sit, live at, or wait for

Samukuru - Father-in-law

Munyai - Go between

Mabvunzo -Go between

Chuma - Engagement fee asking fee

Nganga - Lobola Witchdoctor or diviner

Chiremba - Witchdoctor or diviner

Mudzimu - Family spirit

Midzimu - Family spirit

- (Now Rhodesia Literature Bureau, Ministry of Education.)

The Progress of Shona and Ndebele Literature

by W. Krog

Creative writing of any significance in the two vernaculars of Rhodesia dates from the establishment of the Southern Rhodesia African Literature Bureau as part of the Native Affairs Department in 1954.* The primary aim in its establishment as a bookproducing agency was prompted by the almost total lack of vernacular books. An ever increasing number of African children were being taught to read, mainly in their own languages, but they found no material with which to practise their newly won skill. The problem, common to many other developing countries, has been defined as "Literacy without literature" and UNESCO statistics show that large numbers of people revert to illiteracy as a result.

It was not until 1957 that the Bureau's first sponsored book was published, an event that was later to have minor political repercussions. This pioneer novel of Shona literature entitled "Feso", was written by Solomon Mutsvairo. It was approved as a set reader in

schools for two years and went to three printings. African Nationalist politicians claimed that the book was a brilliant allegory and that between the lines could be read a slashing attack upon the "oppressive" whitedominated Government. It was maintained that the Bureau officials responsible for the selection of manuscripts for publication had been cleverly hoodwinked into sponsoring propaganda against their own Government. In a published interview, in Canada, however, Mutsvairo admitted that he had no such intention when he wrote the story, which he copied from a Zulu book while studying at Adams College, Natal. The main theme, the oppression of one African tribe by another conquering tribe was taken to be a reference to conditions in Rhodesia by those whose political ends were thus served. When the book went out of print there were allegations that it had been banned, but it was the publishers, Oxford University Press, who decided not to reprint for a fourth printing, basing their decision on purely publishing economics.

Shona literature, therefore, had a somewhat controversial start, and the Bureau made it known that its particular publishing taboos were, broadly speaking, politics and religion. There has been some criticism of this policy but it is the function of the Bureau to promote popular reading material, not to propagate political or religious views. Some misinformed critics have gone so far as to maintain that African writers are compelled to send their work to the Bureau, which they claim, exercises a form of censorship. This allegation is patently absurd as any writer can obviously send his work to any publisher he chooses. The Bureau acts as sponsor, promoter and agent. It offers an extension service which the writer is free to make use of, or not.

Ndebele books also made their appearance in 1957, the first being "Umthwakazi" by P. S. Mahlangu (now Provincial Education Officer, Matabeleland North), an historical account of Mzilikazi and the founding of the AmaNdebele nation. This was closely followed by "AmaNdebele KaMzilikazi" by Ndabaningi Sithole, also an historical narrative. Early Shona novels were "Nzvimamutsvairo" by Bernard Chidzero (a brilliant scholar and a PhD), "Murambiwa Gorede", Solomon Mutsvairo's second novel, and "Kumazivandadzoka" by John Marangwanda (schoolmaster, now personnel manager). Most of these early writers were university graduates for whom the establishment of the Bureau provided a welcome outlet for their creative works. As an additional stimulus the Bureau organised its first literacy competition in 1956. Annual competitions have provided the main incentive for writers to the present day.

The winner of the Shona section of this competition was Patrick Chakaipa (now Archbishop) with his adventure story "Karikoga Gumiremiseve". The book was first published in 1958 and this year has gone to its ninth printing, thus celebrating its twentieth anniversary in print. It is a story that will never die and it is read with as much enjoyment by schoolchildren today as when it first came out. Chakaipa has been justly called "The father of Shona literature" as it was he who showed how the language could best be used in literary form, thus revealing the immense depths of Shona with its wealth of idioms, ideophones, proverbs, and range of expression. He went on to win other competitions and four more of his novels were sponsored by the Bureau, some dealing with the olden days of tribal history, others taking presentday social problems as their theme. The winner of the second prize in the Shona section was Paul Chidyausiku whose

"Nhorooondo Dzokuwanana" is set against a background of Shona marriage customs. Chidyausiku was an agricultural instructor and, later, editor of a mission newspaper. He is currently on the editorial staff of the Bureau. His literary output is considerable, and a book has been written about him and his work ("The Imaginative Writings of Paul Chidyausiku" by George Kahari). This also applies to Patrick Chakaipa ("The Novels of Patrick Chakaipa" by George Kahari). The first prizewinning novel in Ndebele was "Akusoka Lingenasici" by Isaac Mporo (now an Education Officer). It has recently been reprinted after having been out of print for many years.

This early written vernacular literature revealed the distinct influence of its oral predecessors. The Ngano folk tales related by the storytelling Sarungano were the most significant forms of the age old oral literature of the Shona. The Ndebele equivalent to the Ngano are the Inganekwane. The narrator, in person, was an important part of the stories and he often repeated himself to achieve an effect, or reminded his audience of what he had previously said. He also explained any points that might not be easily comprehended. Practically all the stories had a moral and the names of the characters revealed what their actions and role in the stories were likely to be. Much of this technique was carried forward into the early written form of vernacular literature. In "Karikoga Gumiremiseve" Chakaipa frequently participates in the story by writing, "You remember what happened in the last chapter", or, "As I have already related". Mutsvairo in "Faso" frequently finds it necessary to go into explanations of the actions or customs of his characters which to Shona readers would be foreign, as the story was basically a Zulu traditional one. Mutsvairo breaks his narrative with lyrics and praise songs which have no direct reference to his story. In "Nzvangamutsvairo" Chidzero invites the reader, who in earlier days would have been the audience, to participate by saying, "Just listen to this" or, "Look at this".

Vernacular literature provides an interesting field for research for sociologists and historians. Most of the works contain details of many Shona and Ndebele customs. The historical stories are usually based on those that have been handed down orally, and many others deal with the social conditions and problems of the era in which they were written. "Nzvangamutsvairo" accurately depicts life as it was in the 1950's for the Africans of Southern Rhodesia. The sometimes devastating effect of the western way of life upon the unsophisticated man from the Reserve is a common theme of the early works. The traditional way of life was crumbling. Education was revolutionising ideas and values. But while in the process of losing the benefits of the old ways it was found that the benefits of the new were unattainable. These early books make the modern reader appreciate the great advances made by our African society since the books first appeared. They are a valuable record of an important transitional period in the history of Rhodesia. But it is an almost amusing experience for the Bureau editor who reads the page proofs of a reprint of these pioneer books today for he is attuned to the more sophisticated way of writing of modern vernacular writers.

To date, the Bureau has been responsible for the publication of some 90 pieces of creative writing in Shona and for 50 in Ndebele. These are mainly novels, novelettes and plays, and do not include several volumes of poetry, proverbs, riddles and other cultural

material. The total number of Bureau publications stands at 280. These include homecraft, language studies, instructional, folklore comics and some instructional material in English. On average, 20 new titles are being produced each year. Early attempts to market the books met with the question, "Will these books teach me something so that I may pass an examination and qualify for a better job?" and the story books found their only market as supplementary readers in schools. However, the Bureau's activity in preaching "The Reading Habit", in taking books to the people by mobile book vans, and in broadcasting, have been highly effective. The demand for vernacular books from both schools and the public grows every year. On average, the annual sales of books over the last three years stands at 120 000 copies. This figure would be greatly increased if conditions were more favourable to the marketing of books in rural areas, the present situation being an obvious obstacle.

One of the significant aspects of the progress of Shona literature, in particular, has been the success of the Government appointed Shona Language Committee in evolving a form of spelling, orthography and word division which has become known as Standard Shona. This has made possible the publication of books in a form of Shona which is both universal and readily understood by readers from the diverse dialect groups of Manyika, Zezuru, Karanga, Ndau and Korekore. The late Father M. Hannan,

who was Chairman of the Committee for many years, compiled the "Standard Shona Dictionary" which was first published in 1959, and with his team of dialectal experts, produced a fully revised edition in 1974. This 1 000 page publication is of entirely Rhodesian origin and has been hailed as one of the best examples of a dictionary of any African language. The literature has helped to build up the dictionary and the dictionary in turn has contributed to the literature. As yet, Ndebele has not been so fortunate in this regard, although the existence of its literature, and the appearance of Pelling's "Ndebele Dictionary" provided essential evidence for the Ministry of Education in its successful application to the overseas examination authorities to admit Ndebele as an examinable language. The existence of the two vernacular literatures is of inestimable value in the educational field, for the study of a language involves the study of its literature. The wealth of new books appearing annually is making such studies more rewarding. Both Shona and Ndebele are now available to students up to University degree level.

What of progress in the quality of material now submitted and published, and the calibre of the new authors? A look at one of the leading African writers in Rhodesia today will give us an idea. Charles Mungoshi won the 1968 Literary Competition in Shona with his now popular novel "Makununu Maodzamoyo". He followed this up with "Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva" which some say is one of the best novels in Shona. The judges of the 1976 PEN/Book Centre Literary Award also thought so, and awarded him a prize of \$300 for the best work in Shona for that year. The author had also been writing in English and his first book in that language was published by O.U.P. East Africa. Called "The Coming of the Dry Season" the work was unfortunately banned in Rhodesia, but it would seem that the politically inspired back cover blurb compiled by the publishers had as much to do with this as anything. His second novel in English, "Waiting for the Rain", was published by Heinemann and entered for the English writing section of the 1976

Award. It was among scenes of unprecedented acclaim that the author was announced the first African winner of the English section as well as winner of the vernacular section, on the same night. It is claimed that his work in English is certainly equal in quality to that produced by some of the well-established West African writers. In 1977 the vernacular award was won by Ndabazinhle Sigogo, the best known and most prolific novelist, poet and playwright in Ndebele. In 1978 Kingstons took over the award and increased the scope and the prizes to \$500 for each of the three sections, English, Shona and Ndebele. The Shona section was won by a promising new writer, Aaron Moyo, and the Ndebele section by the most successful African woman writer in Rhodesia, Barbara Makhalisa, Ndebele novelist and playwright. All the awards mentioned, with the exception of the English section award in 1976, were on the strength of material which had been sponsored for publication by the Literature Bureau.

It is interesting to note that vernacular writing has long ceased to be the preserve of the graduate or highly educated man or woman. N. S. Sigogo wrote most of his poetry and his first novel while he was a District Commissioner's messenger. By self-education he has risen to be an editor in the Matabeleland branch of the Literature Bureau. Aaron Moyo could not write his own name until after he first went to school at the age of fifteen. He is now an unemployed welder who makes a living by selling wood carvings. Charles Mungoshi was an unemployed ex-forestry worker when he had his first literary success. The winner of the second prize in the 1966 Shona Literary Competition was David Chiguvare, an eighteen year old "teaboy" in a Salisbury factory. Many of the writers are, however, school teachers, as is Barbara Makhalisa, and there are some from journalism and other professions.

The incentives to vernacular writers are becoming more and more attractive with the chance to win a prize in the R.L.B. Literary Competition, the Kingstons/PEN annual Award, and an expanding market for their works, resulting in increased royalties on the sale of their books. It is apparent that provided disruptive tribal and political influences are resisted, there is a tremendous future for vernacular writing in the new Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

NOTES

The reasons why I joined the Ministry and am serving as a District Security Assistant

The love of my country and the defence of law abiding citizens are the reasons why I joined this Ministry. Viewing it on the love of my country. The threat of my country moving into the hands of brutal killers has made me decide to carry a gun and defend it from those evil minded people, also protecting my land rights. On the other hand having taken a closer look into the life of the defenceless law-abiding citizens, not forgetting my relatives in the rural area, I feel and trust there must be someone to give them full protection. I trust anyone in his right sense is prepared to fight evil with tooth and nail. I

am prepared even to undergo any type of hardships fighting for love and peace. Lastly I like money and good things given to me in the course of my duties. I believe if each and every one of us in the Ministry put our country first and other things second we will fight for the better.

Anon November 1978

SANSAGURU AFRICAN TOWNSHIP

This is a new African Township situated in a Tribal Trust Land, 12 km from Rusape on the southern side. There are 278 houses comprising four and five rooms. We have a clinic, primary school, and a beerhall all run by Manicaland Provincial Authority.

In the meantime we have two groceries and a butchery all operating from houses, while a shopping complex is nearing its completion.

The Market Shelter with 25 stands is giving a good service to the inhabitants, with green vegetables, fruits and the like.

The estimated population is about 2 000. The Base Camp (of the DSA) with a Vedette commander, provides security to the township, while offences and crimes are referred to the BSAP.

Certain domestic matters are referred to Chief Makoni at his dare, while others are settled by the Township Superintendent. It shows the Superintendent settles more cases, because they are heard free.

The relationship between the surrounding villages and this Township has grown favourably. The villages regard the Township as their town where they come to sell their produce and get some money.

The recreational activities are getting life to normal, after a serious disturbance earlier this year. There is now a women's club, a girl's Youth Club and a football team.

Football matches and netball games are always there at Vengere Township of Rusape.

The Township is full of developing programmes, although some will take a time to commence, but electricity is shortly coming to light the Township.

Home ownership Is gaining popularity and stands are being applied for.

The kind of living here must be highly adjustable to suit the neighbours who are villagers so that they believe you are in the same camp.

Most villagers believe they are a second class to a town dweller, so the occupants of this Township have suited themselves to gain friends.

October 1978

E. Musabayana Township Superintendent

MIDLANDS PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY

You may have heard of the Midlands Provincial Authority or read about it from some periodicals.

This Authority had its offices at Insukamini Township until end of May, 1978, when it decided to move into Gwelo City. Its move to new offices in the Gwelo City was necessitated by the volume of responsibilities which needed better communication.

Its activities has already been described in the publication, "The Midlands Provincial Authority Newsletter". I need to mention here that Midlands Provincial Authority covers eight districts of Midlands Province, namely, Gwelo, Que Que, Charter, Shabani, Selukew, Umvuma, Belingwe and Gokwe.

It forms the mother body of 57 African Councils from the Tribal Trust Land and African Purchase Land.

Its attempts to assist Councils on large projects from its Government Grants. Midlands Provincial Authority having been formed late in 1975, it established the following items as its priorities for assistance in Community Development in the Province:

- a. secondary schools
- b. clinics and hospitals
- c. water reticulation schemes and building of bigger dams
- d. establishment of Irrigation Schemes
- e. roads and bridges.

Much of this has not been met, due to lack of funds. However, the Authority has been able to assist on a number of Projects needed by Councils in the Midlands Province. e.g. assisted the building of Zhombe F. 2 School (Que Que) by granting \$20 000 (1976). assisted Nhema Council in Selukwe district by providing additional funds to the water system to the Clinic and Jobolinko Township (1977). assisted Chiwundura Council to raise Shungwe Causeway (1978). helped establish an irrigation scheme at Charandura, Umvuma District (1977).

To assist training in Community Development, the Authority have established a Mobile Training Unit. The Unit is equipped with all basic requirements for training and will go from District to District as per requests by trainers.

The Authority in addition to the above, gives donations to all agricultural shows, field days and women's activities. Y.F. clubs have had considerable

Three Poems

by Mrs E. J. Ndhlovu of Esiphenzi TTL

Mr. P. M. J. Lombard, who sent these from Essexvale, comments: I find the poem entitled "Dumezweni" to be of particular interest. It is in praise of a local Essexvale farmer, Mrs. Stella Coulson, known to the locals as Dumezweni Ka Mahiokazulu who has done a tremendous amount of good work in this District, both with Europeans and Africans. Mrs. Coulson's mother (Mrs. Richardson) was a founder member of the Women's Institute and the first W.I. Club was formed in this District in December 1925. The other founder member of the W.I. was Mrs. Constance Fripp. Mrs. Coulson established the first W.I. African Women's Clubs in the District and is now fully committed with assisting the Federation of African Women's Clubs.

The poem Esikhoveni is in praise of Mzilikazi's father, Matshobana, and also relates to a community development training centre in Essexvale called Esikhoveni. Many Women's Club courses are held at this centre for women from all over Matabeleland. The poem Bekezela pays tribute to the late Miss Dorothy BowersWinters who for many years worked with Women's Clubs in this District and was Regional Chairman of the F.A.W.C. Bekezela means 'patience' and is the name by which the locals knew Miss Bowers-Winters. It was written before her death on 29th December 1978.

DUMEZWENI

Dumezweni Dumezweni
Bangaki abafana lo Dumezweni?
Bangaphi abafana lo Dumezweni?
Sithi Impilo ende Dumezweni.

Izinsuku leminyaka ziyatshovana
Ilanga liphume liyetshona
Kodwa wena gugu lethu ungatshon.
Sithi Impilo ende Dumezweni.

Itholwa ngaphi inhliziyo enje?
Lutholwa ngaphi utando olunje?
Utholwa ngaphi umusa onje?
Sengilihambe ngaliqeda, phinde.

Dumezweni Ka Mehlokazulu
Ukhothama Kuwe wonke uzulu
Ngoba wena uphilela uzulu
Sitsho kuwe Dumezweni ka zulu.

Ungafi Dumezweni
Ungatshoni Dumezweni

Ungaphenduki Dumezweni
Hlala uhleli ulesibindi Dumezweni.
Dumezweni Wethu.

DUMEZWENI

Dumezweni, Dumezweni
How many are like Dumezweni?
How many are like Dumezweni?
We say long life to Dumezweni.

Days and years pass by
The sun rises and sets
But you our pride please do not set.
We say long life to Dumezweni.

Where is such a spirit found?
Where is such love found?
Where is such kindness found?
I have gone everywhere, but failed.

Dumezweni Ka Mehlokazulu
Everybody bows to you
Because you live for everybody.
We say you are the Dumezweni of everybody.

Never die Dumezweni
Be as day always
Never change Dumezweni
Be always brave Dumezweni.
Our Dumezweni.

ESIKHOVENI

Wafelani Matshobana ungabonanga?
Watshonelani Dlozi lethu ungabonanga?
Ngitsho kuwe kanye Zwide kaLanga
Umthwakazi usethuthukile.

Ungathi kumbe yinganekwane
Kwamgwaqo uyilitshe kuphela
Kwaluba ngarii labekwa kuphela.
Lapha kuhlala amakhosi na?

Izakbiwo kungani uphakathi kwephupho
Ungathi zavuka zikhona

Ngena uhlale ulale khona.
Lapha kuphila uMthwakazi.

Angikhulumi ngokuya emlonyeni
Ufika ungoyathayo
Ubuvela kwakho ungophilayo.
Lapha kuthuthuka uMthwakazi.

Hamba eSikhoveni uyethol'imfundo
Hamba eSikhoveni uyethol'impocuko
Hambo eSikhoveni uyethol'ulwazi.
Lapha kukwa vusingqondo.

ESIKHOVENI

Why did you die Matshobana before you saw?
Why did you our ancestral spirit die before you saw?
We say this to you Zwide kaLanga
The Nation is uplifted.

Taking it as though a tale
Along the road you are the only stone
As though only put there.
Is that where the kings stay?

In connection with buildings you may feel as though in a dream
As though naturally built
Enter, stay and sleep there.
That is where the Nation gets life.

Taking not food into account
You arrive hungry
You return home satisfied.
That is where the Nation is uplifted.

Go to Sikhoveni and get education
Go to Sikhoveni and get progress
Go to Sikhoveni and get knowledge.
Here is where brain is enlightened.

BEKEZELA

Kutholwa ngaphi ukubekezela okunje?
Kutholwa ngaphi ukuzimisela okunje?
Sengikhweli izintaba Nganigena emanzini phausi olwandle
Kodwa uBekezela kuphela olakho.

Sekuyiminyaka ngingakuboni okunje
Ngingene emansontweni akukho kunje.
Izindawo ezinengi zihanjwa ngu Bekezela
Ukuya kwethula lezo zibusiso
Sizithathe sizikophele kithi.

Bekezela sekukade ngilokufisa
Bekezela sekungamasonto ngilindile
Bekezela sekuyiminyaka ugilanganzelela.
Ngize ngitsho ngokubusiswa okunagaka.
Bekezela, Bekezela wethu impilo ende.

Bekezela ngikopkle lokho kubekezela Bekezela ngigqokise okwakho ukubehezela Awu!
Bekezela ngifisa lami ugibekezele Bekezela, Bekezela ungasitshiyi.

Bekezela ungu mama wezikuhungwane
Bekezela u ngu mzali wezizu kuiwane
Bekezela sikiulise ugothando makho
Usenze siberigomama abahlangeneyo
Bekezela, Bekezela, hialalathi.

BEKEZELA

Where is such patience to be found?
Where has such tolerance been found?
I have climbed mountains
I have dived into seas.
But only Bekezela has this.

For years I have seen no such
Have been to church, but no such
To place Bekezela's gone much
To shower those blessings
That we pin on us.

Bekezela its long I have been longing
Bekezela its weeks I have been waiting
Bekezela its years I have been yearning
To say what a blessing
Bekezela Our Bekezela live long

Bekezela pin on me that patience
Bekezela let me wear your patience
Oh Bekezela I so wish to be patient.
Bekezela, Bekezela leave us not.

